SPIRITUAL TREASURE

Containing Our

OBLIGATIONS

GOD,

VERTUES

A Perfect Christian.

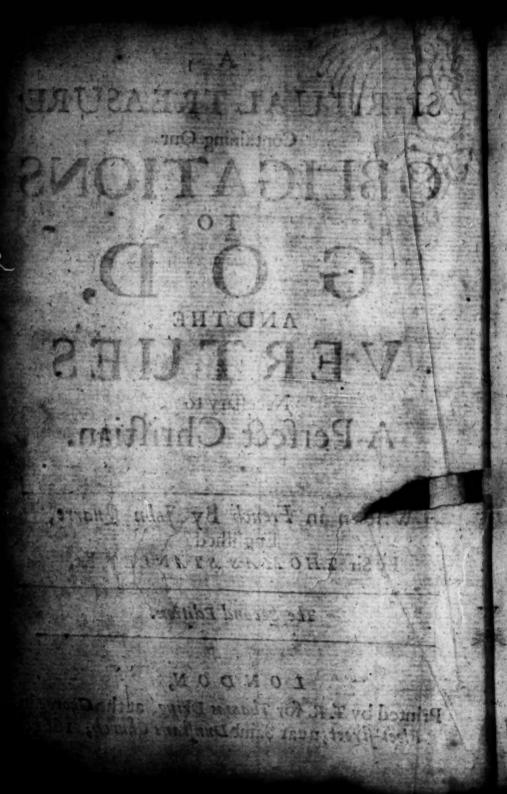
Author in French

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The Epiftle, loc.

s indebted for the shoot to Edition: And baving berein fatisfied the Importunity of the One, and the Antick of the Land the Street to four Ladiship, together with the Surface Ladiship.

Madam, ,MACAM.

HAT You bere receive, is due onely to Your self, it being the Product of that contemplative retirement to which my dear Father

resigned the two latest years of his life; The Author is highly esteemed in his own Country; and hath met with so good Reception in ours also, that he already seeth a Second Impression, which in this Age, not a little commends a Treatise of this Nature: Upon this occasion I was sollicited by the Stationer to acquaint the Read der (by whom it hath been so kindly entertained) with the Name of the Person to whom

Eptitle, Os. of for the English Edition: And erein faisfied the Importunity of the d the Suriofty of the Other, it refts onely en it to Tour Ladiship, together with the MADAM Madam, HAT, Tou bete receive, is c onely to Tour fell, it being be I took of that contemplative tirement to which my dear Eat respond the two latest rears of his life; I Author is highly esteemed in his can Country o with the cost Recept in in on also, that he already seeth a Second Inpression which in this Age, not a little commends a Ire tife of this Voture: Von this occasion follicited by the Stationer to acquaint the se Terrore villais of med dead Thomas Stanley. at) with the extense of the Length whom

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PREFACE.

Nder the name of Spiritual Treasure, behold the Image of a perfett Christian, which I here present thee, Devout Reader. It hath taken the name of Treasure, because it contains, as in a hidden mine, the highest divine thuths of Christian Piety; it is a Pourtract of Perfection, the Image of a true Ubriftian, or all which the Sonne of God hath left to his Church. And those which I propose to you in this Treasure, represent a lively Image of that perfecti. on whereto we are called, and, by the grace of Christianity conducted Perhaps you may remember that this Book hath heretofore appeared under the same name, but it was upon another defign. For then its treated onely of some particular Ventues, such onely as serve to subject the foul so the guidance of God, and the spirit of graces It had then no other object, but the refignation of the Creature to the will and

nd withdrawn from Timited Ct, speaks in generally explains enciples of Christianity, and deferibes the principal Vertues necessary for a perfett Christian As for the Stile, it is concile; confining it felf to the truth which it exposes the most plain. ly that may be, despising all Ornan ents of words; fince truth hath so much luftre of it self, as the need not borrow of others. The World perhaps will not hearken toit; or, fuffering it to speak, will not understand it, for its Doctrine is too divine, its Principles too high: That which it proposes is wholly contrary to what the World professeth. And it is much to be feared that many will dispute it, considering that farfebood and malice have taken fuch deep root in the greater part, as loving nothing but vanity, and unwilto consent to truth. We live in an age fo corrupt, that even Christians maby times fear to be good, least they should

ork of the Creator. Now it is univer-

mould be perfecuted, and a verted med to appear vertuous, las should be derided at the de-Hardly can it promile it fall ter reception amongst them that ary profession of Piety, for their and ile, that feek nothing but their own the faction in the most holy thing ainlove hath fuch absolute power of ents fouls; that they flatter themselves in uch very thing, believing all to be go orwhich is agreeable to them's and aps the other fide, feeming Devotions, he fo much applause among men, tha will be hard to perfwade the cont iples ry. So that our perfect Christian speaks here purely of Truth, and er orld of Piety, cannot eafily avoid the ous censures of men. For as he for Christianly (for his stile is in the ken so he condemns freely all that is as worthy of God in the purity of wil-Spirit; which may appear fire nan and those who confide too much themselves, esteeming acthing ould

their own settions, will foon condense this manner of Discourse. But what remedy? shall we therefore injure Truth? no, she will appear before the eyes of men, in despight of the World, and although she may meet with spirits little capable to receive her, yet it is alwayes good to expose the Image to the view even of her greatest Enemies, for by this meanes they will be forced, soing her, to confess they have no vertue, that they walk in the night of untraths, and perhaps they will apprehend their own misery, and be arready to loose themselves.

And if there are any who think themselves already arrived at the highest point of perfection, slattering themselves in their own esteem, when they shall here consider the excellencies of a bristianity, the purity of the spirit of grace, and admire the designs of God upon Jouls, and see what is necessary for a perfect Christian, they will open those eyes which self-love had be witch-

ed, and acknowledge that their affinished eome far short of their own esteem of them; and then humbling themselves even to the centre of their nothings they will resolve to seek God, to serve him in spirit and truth, after a man-

ner worthy of God. . nienes men

However they who take the paines to read this little work will see, that many deceive themselves to their great mischeif, and will learn that it is not a small matter to gain Heaven (for to such only is Paradise open) and that there is required more purity and vertue then we ordinarily propose. For if the life of a true Christian be a life of God in man; if true perfection be an amorous possession of God, what purity, what vertue must there be in him who will possesse for the large fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure, so precend to an estate so divince the fure of the source of the so

This is a point you must consider of (friendly Reader) as being that which ought to be the only object of your actions. For if you will open your

hat God requires of your rest your shoughts upon es of the flate of Christie all learn that your heart Direct the most half will establish his Kingyour Soul a Heaven ill glorifie himfelf; your of God who lives in you y raign with him. To on shall know that you the World to please God, will in the purity of his holy : is not this and importance ? affifor ion and profit you defire nd what I say, and to rives and obligations that love and ferve God per-1 the two first parts of bird and fourth Thew ou anuft keep, and the inerellary to live a the gives you a pate od Christian.



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Of the Divine Prerogatives whereun. to man is raifed by the State and Grace of Christianity on that build

The first Prerogative. Imples

CHAP. I

How by Baptisme Man is appropriated to God; and confecrated by the bleffed Trinity.

E ye perfect, even as your Fax Mat 5.48. ther which is in Heaven is perfest: These are holy words, words of truth, pronunced by the Holy of holies, the God of

Truth; words that import the beginning and eminency of the estate which we are to attain; words worthy to be engraved not upon

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upon the fronts of our house as a celebrio Sentence of the Ancients; nor printed in our foreheads, in great Characters, like the Law of the Jews, but in the centre of our fouls, and bottom of our spirits. For in these divine words, we behold as in a table brought from heaven, what we are, and what we ought to be. We fee that we are the image of God by creation, and ought to be his refemblance by fanctification. Our foul bearing the image of God, is capable of God himself, and hath an essence so noble and divine, that nothing can fatisfie, nothing can fill her but an infinite effence. Befides, we learn that our foul being called to the refemblance of God, nothing can ennoble her, nothing can perfect her, but the greatness and very perfections of the Divinity. And to this it is that Jefus Christ invites us, when he lays, Be ye perfett as your beavenly Father is perfect : This only is the subject of this little Work. I would to God, that they who are transported with the wonders in Nature, who can admire her greatness, rare varieties and perfections, who willingly confine themselves to the contemplation of the motions of the heavens, of the extent of the earth, of the depth of the fea, of the admirable fecret properties of every thing, would turn back their fight into themselves,

Spiritualt Treasures

to take notice what they are, and what they ought to be, to contemplate the fingul perfection inclosed within their own fouls the greatness whereto God will raise them, and eminency of that state to which they

are called of orthogon doing and albimid vish our spirits, and oblige them to contemplation and admiration, with how much more reason ought we to employ our selves in the confideration of our own foul, for which all things were created! If vertue, faith Plate, be fo beautifull, as that her lufter is able to transform our hearts, and force us to love her, what then is the foul, of which vertue is but the ornament? O foul, faith one of the Fathers, thou lovest the world, yet thou thy felf art of more value then all the world ! Thou admireft the Sun, and yet art more beautifull then all the Stars; Thou dost contemplate heaven, yet art exalted above the firmament. Thy God onely is above thee, all creatures are under thy feet; Let us begin to prepare our hearts to these thoughts; let us call back our distracted spirits from so many objects; let us withdraw our wandering eyes from fo many cariolities, and undeceive our hearts charmed by fo many vanities, that we may apply or felves to the acquilition Made

ifition of this knowledge, for in being notant of thefe truths, man is eftranged from God and himself, serves the creatures who were made to ferve him, makes his vanity an ornament, and advances above himself, that which ought to be under his feet, and farther looking himself in the cuflous purflit of creatures or pernicious affection to the world, he no more thinks of himself, and which is worse, seems no longer to know his God. Hence foring all evils which overflow the earth, all vices and disorders in the life of man. Nor is it ftrange; for how can a Christian serve his God, if he efteem not his greatness, and be ignorant of his divine adorable perfections; and how shall he know them, if he feldome, or never confider them? Befide, how is it possible for a Christian to render unto God what he ought, and to live as God requires, if he take no time to reflect upon himself; if he know not what he is, whence he comes, whither he goes, how he lives? In this it is he ought to employ his thoughts and time. The highest employment of man, fays Heraclitus, is to seek himself; and we say, the most necessary; yet we are not with Democritus to put out our eyes, and deprive our felves of the fight of all creatures, thereby with more ease and attention to apply

Part I. Spirituall Treatme

apply our selves to the study of this high philosophy, the knowledge of God, and our selves; we need not go to such an extremity. On the contrary, let us presente our eyes and attention to contemplate at leifure the image, which I am going to describe unto you. It is the pour tracture of a true Christian, in which shall be drawn in lively colours the Christian vertues, and represented the dispositions; actions, and piety, wherein all Christians ought to live.

To speak after this manner is proportion nable to this subject. He that would make a man to see what he ought to be, must draw his picture, that he may see and contemplate himself therein. The soul like the eye sees all things, yet not it self unlesse by reflection. To make her know her selfe, a glasse must be set before her, wherein are represented the true beauties of the state of grace, the excellencies of Christianity, her obligation to perfection, her capacity to possesse God; that, considering all these, she may see what she is, and what she ought to be to her God.

Thus feeing her felfe, the knows her felf, knowing her helf, the esteems accordingly of her own being, life, and condition, and by these degrees, arriving to this esteem, she

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faith-

makefully endeavours to render God the noncontrology and lervice due to him, eares to be lead a life fuitable to the condition and dignity whereto God hath called her."

To represent to the life to great perfection, and to acknowlege what the foul is before God to whom the is called, and may arrive by the affiftance of a supernatural power. We must consider the essence and effice of the Mysteries wrought by the Son of God upon the Earth, and what he hath accomplished in Heaven, because they are the beginning and source of all Graces wherewith we are inriched; they make us know what God requires of us, what he will operate in us and by us. These then we must propose. Behold three which we must make choice of, including all the Excellencies of Christianity; what soever is to be said of the rest, is to be deduced from these.

The first estate wherein we are established by the grace of Christianity, is that which we receive in Baptism, where we are consecrated to the most holy Trinity. The excellency of this estate consists herein, that the most holy Trinity by this Sacrament of Reconciliation, giving us at once a new being, and a new birth, it sanctifies and consecrates us by an Unction altogether extraordinary

dinary and divine, and by this extraordi-

nary confectation draws us from our felves, feparates us from the common Tempelts of the world, to dedicate and refer us wholly to his honour and glory, to call us to a holy conversation which we ought to have with divine persons, as the beloved Apostle faith, That our fellowship may be with the Father, and I John . 3. with his Son Jefus Christ; that by this fociety we may become worthy and capable of the effects of grace and divine communications to be with God, and possessed of God. That which makes this favour most admirable, is, that the most holy Trinity doth vouchsafe to apply it selfe to the accomplishment of this work in a very particular manner; it fanctifies and confecrates us, not after that ordinary way wherewith it acts and performs all other works common to the three Persons ; but in this work of grace and facrament of life, it confectates us in a manner wholly fingular, and full of mysteries, altogether great, and full of love. The Pather fanctifies us, giving us his Son s the Son becomes mearnate, fuffers, and rifeth again for us; the hely Chost works in us Tuffification, infuling into us the abundance of those Graces the Son merited for us. Thus the three Persons by distinct operations proper to every person, effects in us this work

of graces and love in this manner. Thus the most holy Trinity applies it felfo wholly to his after can nextraordinary manner and proper to this Sacrament, to confecrate us to their glory and honour, a confecration for high and mysterious, that it contains all the Truths of Faith, whence the Fathers call Baptisme the Surrament of Faith. This is the first dignity whereto the Christian foulis advanced, but this is not all. Let us go on and penetrate further into this mystery of Love, and we shall fee that this confectation (O miracle of the infinite bounty of God!) places us in God, and is the cause of Gods being in us, not after the manner that he is in all other things, nor by any gift or created grace, but after a wholly extraordinary way, which gives him tous, and causes him to dwell in us. Here God doth disclose his heart to us; the Father shews and gives us his Son is the Sonne gives and applies himselfe to us in the spirit, and in the grace of his Mysteries, and both together making one profusion and communication of their love, fend, and give us the holy spirit. Thus the three divine perfons dwell in us, confecrate us, and fill us with their prefence and abundance of graces. That which is admirable in the excesse of this divine Love, making this grace and estate

estate singularly eminent, is that there is not any other Greenze. not the Angels themselves are advanced to this Dignity: it is reserved only for Christians who are confecrated to the most Hely Traver, after so holy and mysticall a manner. It would require a large Discourse, to teach just to comprehend such rare advantages; but let us content our selves to consider; first, that all creatures are referred to God, but a Christian por onely referred, but consecrated; as if you should say, that he belongs more to God, and is more holy then all other creatures. O how beautifull is this truth, worthy to make us lift up our hearts to God!

Secondly, we know that both Angels and men in the state of Innocency, were replenished with the graces and gifts of God; but the Christian, in the state of Christianity, is not onely filled with divine gifts and be nestes, but with the most holy Trimity it self, which dwels in him, and confectates him after the manner we have declared.

Thirdly, all creatures, even Angele them selves, behold God in some of his divine qualities, as the Seraphins in his love, the Chembims in his knowledge, the Throne in his stability, and so the rest, but the Christian by a happy advantage, heholds and relates to him in the extent of all his greatness,

hoped

not onely as Creator, but as Father, Socious, and Sandiffer; not only as God confidered in his Nature and divine Effence, common to the three Perfons, but by a happy reflection he diffinctly beholds the three divine Perfons, and refers himfelf to God as the Father, as the Son, and as the holy Choft. Thus by one speciall and singular Grace communicated to him in Baptisme, he is consecrated to the most holy Trinity, and made the Temple; Throne, and Residence of the inessable, immense, and adorable Trinity. What can be more said?

CHAP. II.

How boly the life of a Christian ought to be,

VI Subject, which contains so many excellencies of the soul, and such extraordinary favors of God, and when we have said all we can, we must acknowledge it is far short of the Subject. We know that God works great matters in the souls of his Elect; that his love, mercies, and divine liberality, are as incomprehensible as inestable, which being so, what can be added to the love that God expresses to the world in the mysteric of the Incarnation? What more can be hoped?

Hoped: Haceording to the mysteries of our Parth we believe God gave his son to the world, making him like unto us, to make handelf more capable of being merciful and to us; we cannot doubt but that the fame God of love will fliew himself bountiful in all things elfe, fince he hath made fuch an extraordinary communication of his love, and of himfelf in thus giving us his Son, it cannot feem strange, if now after so divine a gift, he beltow on us his graces to exalt us to fo holy a being; an effate which confecrates us to make us capable of possessing God. Norhing is impossible to him that can do all things: we ought onely to confider a perfect knowledge of the truth of this liames, and a disposition to receive all that God will give us. It were to be wished, that all Chaffians did follow the light of Faith as they are obliged, that being guided and illuminated by this heavenly Pharon, they might know the dignity and excellency of these mysteries, that knowing them, they might adhere to them; that adhering to them, they might become capable of that grace which they include and God will communicate to us, that we may thereby profit as Christ wills, who offers his gifts, defiring we should receive and use them according to his intentions. This counfell we ought

ought to follow in all these mysteries. Let us begin by him, and examine what it is that God demands of us for the benefit of this regeneration & Baptilin. Being confecrated to God by Baptism after so divine a manner, we are no more now our own, but belong wholly to him, nor ought we to make use of our selves but for him. If any profane thing being offered to God, confecrated by ceremonies, or dedicated to celebration of the divine office, is by this means abstracted from common use, and its particular end to be wholly employed in facred things; much more a Christian confecrated to the holy Trinity by Baptisme, solemnly dedicated to Gods service, and referred to his glory, ought to be withdrawn from himfelf, and fuch profane customs as of himself he may commit in his life and actions, to be referred in whatsoever he doth to the service and glary of God.

From these proposed Truths it followeth, that the grace of Christianity communicated by Baptisme, whereto we have right by this Sacrament doth advance man above all creatures, and withdraw him from this world, to associate withGod, and to become his Temple and Throne of rest; that being separated from care and love of the creature,

he may cleave to God only.

The

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The foul may be compared to the woman in the Apocalypie, cloathed with the Sam, Revel. 13. and having the Muon under ber feet, to tell us that our foules being replenished with the true funne of Righteousnesse, ought to raise themselves above all Creatures, and possessing God, contemn all that is not God, of God, or for God. The learned 0rigen fayes, That we ought to efteem, as beyond and above the world, all that is confecrated to God; meaning only those, who by the Ceres monies and ancient Cuftoms of the Church refign themselves to Gods service. If this be true in bare Ceremonies, how much more is he whom God himself confecrates in this Sacrament beyond the world, and above all things. This is the effect of the words of Jefus Christ, when speaking of the spirit of Christie anity which he had infused into his Apostles, he fays, recommending them, and with them all the Elect unto his Father ; The world hates John is. you because you are not of the world, I likewise 19. am not of the world; where we see evidently, Joh. 7.16. that according to the defigns of Jefus Christ, a Christian must be no longer of this world, nor pretend further to the creature then the Son of God did, when he became man, and liv'd upon earth. We learn further, that by this confecration, and the state whereunto we are advanc'd by Baptifm, God assumes a fecond

a fecond interest in us, besides that of creatiwe ought to be more his, and live onely for him. For he hathright to make in us, and of us all that he pleases for his glory, and the accomplishment of his divine will. I need give no other reason hereof then that of the Apostle, Know yee not that your body is the Temple of the boly Ghoft, which is in you, which ye have of God. And ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glarifie God in your body, and in your first, which are Gods. Confider deliberately this Christian truth, weigh all these words, and ye shall see how much ye belong to God, and ought to live for God. Reject not this as a matter new, or too high; it much imports to your good. If you cannot comprehend it, at least admire it and fince they are truths, you ought to believe them; by Faith you shall enter into an estimate of your estate, and acknowledg it is so divine and eminent, that you cannot comprehend it, but can onely fay that he that is all power will effect great things in you. Now if you will endeavour to profit by these proposed verities; First, take heed you commit no facriledge in ferving any other but God, fince ye are confecrated for his glory; be careful to refer your felf unto him, and to offer to him all your actions, be they

2 Cor. 6,

Spirituall Treasures

they never fo little, for they all belong unto him, and he knoweth how from the lowest, meanest things to bring honour to himfelf.

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Secondly, seeing God hath separated you from the world, consecrating you for his glory, and that, by Bapeisme, solemnly in the sace of the Church, you have renounced all its greathesse, and varieties, Take heed you deceive not God, or rather your selves, adhering to the creature, searching after, and following the Vanities of the Time; but see that in pursuit of this promise you have made to God, you do disintangle your selfe all the days of your life, as much as you can possible from these Creatures.

Thirdly, take your affections off from them: and if you will do well, despise them all for God, that your heart, consecrated by an Unition so holy, may be only for God, and love none but God. The best foundation of Piety is to enter into a great esteem of God, and what you are unto him, so to contemn the world and all therein.

Fourthly, Seeing you have no right to your felfe, being marked with the character of Gods substance (so Saint Cyprian calls the love of God) and are wholly his, let him make use of what is his; go out of your felf, go out of your own Interest to God, aim at nothing but the glory of God, and the cin place your principall care; for there is nothing more important in the life of a Christian, nothing more profitable or necessary then to leave wholly himself to God, and to search diligently after God only. This it is that God requires of you, for this benefit whereunto you are obliged in the susception of Baptisme, and by the state of Christianity.

The fecond Prerogative.

CHAP. III.

Of the Filiall adoption of God, whereto all Chri-

He invitery of the Incarnation; a work of Love; and the Master-piece of God, ought to be considered as the foundation of all the Mysteries of the Life of the Sonne of God. From this they have their dignity and excellency; from this they flow as from their source and principle; this we ought to look upon, and adore as the Cause of all our happinesse, for in and by it we have all that we can desire; all the greatnesse, and the

the priviledges and abundance of grace communicated to us in the state of Christianity slows from this inestable Mystery as its spring. It requires an eternity to consider so worthy an object, to look into the excellencies, and to contemplate the effects thereof.

Let us here make a paufe to confider this grace the most advantageous of all we have received from the Son of God in this Myftery, which gives us right and admission to all the rest, the grace of Filiation, which makes us children of God by adoption, a grace given to men, when the Son of God becoming man, made men the fons of God. By this benefit we are no longer the fons of Adam, but of Jefus Christ, who is God, called by the Prophets, The everlasting far ther. By this grace Christians have a new being, a new life, which honoureth and imitates the new life of Jesis in his holy humanity, springing from this as its source and principle. For as the word unites it felf to our nature in the Mystery of the Incarnation, replenisheth and dwells in it as in his proper body, confecrates and elevates it to all the Grandeurs of his divine Filiation; fo the fame Jesus unites himself, not personally, but by a new Grace, and after a fingular manner, proper to the state of Christianity, cor**fecrates**

fecrates us, dwels in us, and advanceth us to the communication of the rights, goods, and greatnesse of his filiation, and would have us (O excesse of love!) to be that by grace which he is by nature, which he would have not onely to be accomplished in glery, but in grace, not onely in Heaven, but upon Earth, where we are truly Sons of God, and in that quality henceforward, we enter into alliance with him, we have right to his heritage: and, which is more (O that we would consider it!) he gives us power to call God our Father, to look up to him as fuch, to relate to him in this quality, in further affurance whereof he gives us his spirit. This St. Paul teacheth, when he faith, Ye bave received the fairit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father, the same spirit it selfe beareth witnesse with our spirit that we are the children of God. It is an effect of the mystery of the Incarnation, and priviledge and excellency of Christianity. Let us deliberate further upon it. St. John, fumming up the graces received from God, in the Mystery of the Incarnation, ranks this the first, for it is the foundation of the rest, saying, To them be gave power to become four of God. If you would comprehend some part of this great favour, think that as there is nothing in Divinity greater then to be the Son of God by Nature, so (but

Rom. 8,

to

to be God bimelfe) nothing is greatenthen to be the Saw of God by grace, St. Cyprian admiring in God the title of Eather, Tayes, L it an ineffable come containing the Mafferie of Secreta hid firm our frints, ancomprehensible our understanding. If then to be Father in the Deity be a thing the most mysterious and ineffable that our fouls can imagine by confequence, to be fon or fuch a Father is a favour and dignity incomprehentible The beloved Disciple causeth is to admire at this great benefit, when he lays, Behold what manner of love the Father bath baftomed up. on us, that roe should be called the fons of God, and be fuch in effect. Sr. John Damafeene fpeaks to this purpole, That the eternall Father fent his Son into the roorld to produce Children that Should be fuch to him by Grace, as Christ's unto bim by Nature; and therefore in pursuit of this Commission, the Son of God, from the time that he became the fon of man, hath created by his power, begotten by his love, and acquired by his merits, and given by his Spirit, many children to his Father, who can breath nothing but glary to his Father, and no longer live, then by his Spirit and

Life.

But to fearch with greater admiration in to this Truck, we must consider the manner by which he greater in 115 so divine a work. We

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received erace, and fairs, by the talking least and gifts of the boly Spire, because allowing the with the Grander of God Steelved and owned as his children. The manner whereby God effects this is admirable; for as the Father bath fealed Jefus Christ with his Seal, and made him his Son; communicating to him his Essence, and making him altoyether equal to himself! so Jesus Christ doth comunicate to us what he himself is, marketh us with his seal, makes us as it were another himself. Wonder, faith Saint Augustine, and repoyce, brethren, we are made of Christ. In pursuite of this benefit, the eternal Father hath given us the Spirit of his Son, which dwelvin us, according to the Apostic. What

Rom. 8.9. dwels in w, according to the Apostie. What can we think to be greater? If we go further herein, we shall find, that we are not advanced to this admirable estate of being the children of God by any simple acceptation, or by bare ceremonies, but by something more reall that passeth into our souls, as Saint Paul implies, by these mysticall terms: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he sweet

Tit.3.5. we have done, but according to his mercy he faved us. It is not for our works, faith he, that the washing of the holy Ghost, that the spirit is given us by Jesus Christ.

To conclude the greatness of this benefit, let us observe with Dronylus the Areasgree, that we are advanced to this divine
estate by a new burth, and divine regeneration;
which the Son of God operates in us in the
bolom of the Church our Mother, to the
honour of God, and in imitation of his eternall generation in the bolom of God, the
Father. Cash it still boo to not only to

Epley a dear children. The Principle etanted we mult bee what benefits AHA Han derive from

the Apollo who faith to ve follower of Call

of the uses the Christians ought to make of file! 1
All adoption whereto they are advanced by
Baptism.norblide and he against all at

The Truths that we have treated of are high, and would require a large Diffeourse; but that our designe, being to prescribe the practice of filial Piety, we will only represent as much as is necessary to manifest what we are, and what our life ought to be in conformity to so eminent an estate.

First then, we must take notice, that in the Language of the Scripture, a Christian is a new Creature in Jesus, and according to the 2 Cor.s. word of the Son of God, a man, if he be a 17.

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Christian,

mult be born again of Cod; and conwith Now, according to the order that chapped in all things, we lay allow and operation mult be considered the being. Whence it follows, allows of a chaptan being a holy dithat makes him the Son of God, Many by Grace as Jeius Chief as by Na me achene allo and life bught to be wholly divine and conformable to the flair of the Son of God. This is the Dollrine of the Apolile, who faith, Be ye followers of God, Bph. 1.1: as dear children. This Principle granted, we must fee what benefits we can derive from wife the Christian's owner to mill cool The firthis a contempt of this World, for it is the heritage of the children of Adam, condemned by a determined fentence, and a day of execution appointed, when by the Justice of God it shall perish in a generall Let us then despite this heritage of Adam, and feek that of the children of God, Heaven, or, to fay better, God himfelf; Say with oh 18.36. Jefus Chrift, with a found heart, My King. dom is not of this world. Remember that you must keep the rank of the Sons of God, as Princes of the Blood: And as the Princes of this world do maintain themselves in their

their Estate, and that greatness which their Birth allows them, fo do you couragiously maintain your felves in all rights due to you by this new divine Birth. O how great and fublime is it, if you behold it with the eye of Faith! The rank you are to hold with the Creatures of heaven and earth, is the fame with Jefus Christ, who accompanies you to his estate and greatness, the grace of the Son of God, which you receive as a Christian giveth you right to his heritage: If Rom. 8. children, saith Saint Paul, then heirs of God, 17. and joynt-heirs with Christ. Now, the bosom of the eternall Father, is the only heritage of Jefus Chrift; there is his eternall dwelling, there his repose, there the feat of his delight, the Throne of his greatness: Even this is the rank you ought to keep, there ought to be your repose, your delight in the fruition of this onely happiness: Remember that the bosom of God is the place destin'd for your eternall dwelling, a place of glory, and permanent felicity. God only is your heritage, undervalue not him for transitory vanities of this world; forfake him not for the whole world, unless you would be for ever miferable. Admit this truth farther into your heart, believe it not an imagination of a new Piety; 'tis the foundation of Christianity, the ground and principle

fidering intentively, you will wonder to see Christians confess these truths, and hope for so great a good, yet become so blind, as to suffer themselves to be deluded by deceitful vanities, and vain illusions of the creatures, to sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage; and whilest they pretend to be the children of God, glorying in so divine a being, to live like the children of men,

thinking of nothing but the earth.

The second benefit is a great defire of Paradife, fighing daily thousands of times after our heritage, Heaven, bewailing the want of, and demanding the liberty promifed and due to the children of God. In this thought of our Celestiall Sion, our fweet Countrey, we grieve to fee our felves fo long in a frange Land. It is hard to attend with fo great impatience a happy day, a good hour, an honour which we are made to hope for; yet we are without sense in attaining it, the true and ineffable joyes of Paradife. Great God! can it be that the Manna of Heaven should not cause us to loath the Onyons of Egypt? How long, children of men, how long shall we have hearts of Adamant, infentible toward the things of Heaven, yet open for the transitory goods of this curled earth, to love lying, to follow

low vanity to defnile eternall truths. There cannot be a folly more condemnable: Let us open our eyes, and grieve to fee our felves so fastened to the creature, so confident in vanity, fo little relishing and esteeming heavenly things. Let us be ashamed to fee the children of heaven eat the food of Smine in a strange land, not remembering the abundance of all things in their Fathers

House.

Thirdly, we learn that we must live nobly, like the children of God: Let us take heed we dishonour not our extraction, and degenerate from the place whence we came: Let us keep the rank we have received in the House of God. The Emperor was derided for it, who past his time and life away in catching Flyes: let not us do so, amusing our selves about the creatures, and only labouring here for earth, fince we know all in the world is of less value then a Fly, and that in the fight of God, the universe is less then the least Atome: Let us rather imitate that other Prince, who invited by honour and the greatness of his birth, would never run nor play, but among Kings, his equalls: Applying this to our subject, let us fay, that a Christian being the child of God, and confequently Prince of Heaven, ought to expect no beritage but Paradife, to feek no other company but Saints and

and Angels; to take no content but in Jefus Christ, endeavouring to follow him in all, to imitate him in all, fince he hopeth to raign

with him.

These Truths deserve to be deliberately confidered. Saint Cyprian, in a Discourse upon the Afcension, raises them higher, faying, That Christians, as children of God, are obliged to be like God. The fame is the Doctrine of Saint Paul, Be ye followers of God as dear children. The reason of this Precept is evident; for, if as children of God, we will enjoy his glary to eternity, the possession and the beritage of Jesus Christ, and become one with him, must we not necessarily be like him, in purity, in perfection, in fantity? If we will possess God in God, and live eternally in the bosom of God, must not our life be wonderfull, our actions holy, if we will merit an effate so perfect and holy? Nothing is more just! Herein appears the Christian estate so great, divine, and perfect, in that making us children of God, it gives us right to the heritage of God, obliges us to lead a life worthy such an heritage. By this principle we see how much they are deceived, who think and speak meanly of Christianity, or living a life common to the children of the world, promife themselves the heritage of the children of Heaven. Let us teach them how

how they ought ed live, and thew what the themselves Christians 100 years and and the and man did act after a divine inpuner, pros

work after this want of the John Adon

sostioned to the eminence of his effice, To

What the Actions of Christians ought to be.

Leing the state of Christianity is fo eminent, That it advances the foul to a filiall being To droine it follows that the actions of Christians ought to be eminently devout and perfeet. This truth is proved not only by the common principles, that the life and operations of every thing ought to be conformable to their being; but likewife by another maxime of Christianity, that a Christian receive all by Chrift, and in Chrift; and as the Apostle fayes, of him, and through him, and to him. In Roman pursuit of this Principle, all the actions of a 36. Christian ought to be done in the Spirit of Jefur, and in respect to God, which makes them high, perfect, and holy; High, as proceeding from Christ its principle; Holy, as being wrought in him; perfect and pure, as being wrought for him; fuch actions we truly call Christian.

To explicate this more particularly, we must observe, that a true Christian action must be done in grave, in the spirit, in the difpo-

dispositions, wherewith Jefur Christ perform. ed his actions, during his wayfaring life, yet in a different way, for the fon of God as God and man did act after a divine manner, proportioned to the eminence of his estate. To work after this manner is proper only to bim, to this we cannot arrive, neither must we aspire unto it, but we are obliged to act after a manner very near this, and the highest that can be, excepting this. For, the manner that we ought to observe in our actions. fpringing from the son of God, must byconsequence be very like it. So a Christian action should be that which is made in the spirit of God that fefus Christ hath borne upon the Earth, accomplished in the boly and perfect dispositions of the Son of God himself. By this only Circumstance we may judge of the difference of our actions, for all that we do. without the spirit, and without dispositions agreeable to an action worthy of God, is to do nothing, or very little, fuch actions ordinarily proceed but from a naturell inclination, or, which is worse, from the instigation of our own Lusts and Love of our selves. Let us farther confider this Truth, which will feem hard or new to those who know not the excellency of Christianity, who never regard the purposes of God, who are ignorant of the mysteries of their salvation. When the the life and allions of a Christian are faid to comprehend their perfedien, you must rethe world, not onely to communicate to us his grace, but to dwell in us, and give us his pire and life, to give them to us, not onely to justifie us, and, as we fay, to put us into the flate of grace, but to be in us, to dwell there, to be the beginning of a new life, and new spirit in us, and to give us dispositions proportionable to such an estate. This the Apostle teaches when he sayes, that the eternall Father hath put the spirit of his Sonne into our hearts, and that the spirit it self Rom. 8. beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the 16. children of God; whereby we fee, that being justified by the state and grace of filiation and divine adoption we live in the life and spirit of God, which is made our life and fpirit, which is in us, dwells in us, governs us, inlivens us, and is the Principle of our Actions, makes them pleafing to God, fupernatural, and worthy of Paradife. Thus the life of a Christian, according to the determination of God is far above all lives, a being above all beings. I leave you to judge what the Actions of Christians ought to be, proceeding from a principle to holy and di-

You will find all this very reasonable, and

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admire the bounty and mildem of God in this Conduct of our fouls, if we will confiden that the sternal mord was made man; that by debasing himself, he might render to his Father an honour worthy of God, he came upon the Earth to establish, by the merit and by the spirit of his Crosse, the Kingdom of God in our feals, and to make us worthy to feroe and benow God, after a manner worthy of God. For this cause he advances unto himfelf, he confecrates our lives and actions by his Death and blood, and that they may be referred worthily to the honour and dery of his Father, he unites himfelf to us communicates to us his life, his spirit, and difpofitions, to make us capable to praise God according to his greatness, which we could never do if we did not take of him, and from him, this power and disposition. This be gives us when he dwells in us by the grace of fliation and divine adoption, whereto we are advanced when we are made Christians. Hence we fee, that Christian Attions ought to be baly , perfett , and divine , that a Chri-Gian Life ought to be the very life of Jefus Christ, living and working in him by his spiric. His adiene, his inward difpositions must be a lively image and perfect expression of the actions and holy intention of Jefus Christ, But alas, we think no more of these Truckes, Chri-Stians

well complain and say with the ancient Philosopher, That the life of man is spent either in doing evil, or in doing nothing, or in doing pre-

posterously what he ought to do.

To undeceive our felves of these common abuses, to enter farther into the knowledge of the state of the grace of Christianity, and to fee more evidently what we ought to be, let us further remember, that as Christians, we are members of the Sonne of God; he is our head, a head that infuses life in us. In this quality he hath right to live and act in us as our fouls act and live in our bodies. This confider'd, we must fay, that as the effence and excellency of a Chriftian confifteth in his being a member of Fesus Christ, so the perfection of Christian du ties, is, that they are operated by Jesus Christ living and operating in us as his members. I fay not onely that we must imitate the San of God, and do all our actions in Grace, that thereby they may be called Christian; but also, that they ought to be with the same intentions and Spirit wherewith Jefus Christ did act on Earth, which he communicated to his Church, and to all his. Our Actions ought not only to be good and reasonable, but to be worthy of the Son of God, our head, whose members we are, Therefore they must

must be animated by his life, guided by his mations, and regulated by his intentions, seeding that to this end, he giveth us his spirit and life to be our spirit and life, and that he gives us freely abundant grace, in him and by him to accomplish all our actions. This is of great importance; for which we shall one day render a strict account, when God shall judge the uprightness of men by so extraordinary a favour. Certainly he will examine and punish the ignorance, the contempt and abuse of so many graces, which he hath acquired for us by his travells and cross, and offereth us with so much love and bounty.

This will appear yet more evident, if we confider the common belief of all the faithfull, who acknowledge that the life and actions of a perfect Christian, ought to be actions of grace. Let us therefore examine what the Essence and Dignity of this grace is; for supposing that the life of a Christian is a life of grace, we must necessarily grant, that our actions by consequence ought to be conformable and correspondent to the sanctity and dignity of the grace which gives them life, sanctifies them, and advances them, fince they must be proportionable and semblable to

the cause.

We know that the grace which fantlifies

and gives life to our actions, is a grace made for the Son of God, that from him it flows into us, that we are not replenished and enriched, but from his bounty. This granted, our life and actions must be holy and perfect by the same sanctity and perfection, which is in Jesus Christ, which is lovingly communicated to, and engrafted in our souls, sanctifying, enlivening and perfecting our life and altions.

When we fay that this Grace comes from Jesus Christ, we express in this alone the excellency and dignity of it. For to know the dignity and eminency of the grace of Christianity, it suffices not to say, as we commonly do, that it is supernaturall, because in it there is nothing singular. For the grace given to Angels and to man before his fall, was also supernatural. We must say, that the grace of Christianity, is a grace made for the Some of god, and consequently worthy of the greatness of the Santtity, and divinity of the incarnate word; this makes it the raiser of an Order, and gives it a being much different from the first, and from the order meerly supernaturall. This gives it a being and order as different from the grace of the Angels, as they are from Jesus Christ, as the fonne from the fervant. Now applying what we have faid, that Actions ought to be

conformable to their Principle, we conclude that the actions of a Christian being sanctified and enlivened by the grace and spirit of Jefus, ought also to be wholly conformable to Jesus Christ; their principle being more then humane, more then angelicall, conformable to the purity and sandtity of the grace of the Sonne of God, worthy the Labours of his Croffe and death. To this end, St. Paul adviseth, that ye walk worthy of the vocati-Ephef.4.1. on wherewith ye are called; words that deferve to be confidered, fince that God will demand an account of us of his favours and benefits, and will judge our actions and lives, according to the dignity of our vocation; according to the perfection and sanctity of his Grace, in brief, according to the life of Jesus Christ, which alone ought to be the rule and Law of Christians.

Furthermore we must consider the rule of God over our Soules, wherin we may admire the wayes and meanes, whereby the divine bounty, and infinite wisdome of God, uses to give us graces, necessary to accomplish our actions, in that perfection and sanctify that he requires. I intend not to speak of the secret and unknowne means, of the graces, inspirations, motions, and speedy succours wherewith God is pleased to illuminate our Spirits, to enslame our wills, and to direct all the

the motions and actions of our life. But I defire only to infift upon the consideration of the Sacraments, that the some of God hath left in his Church, as channells by which he continually powers out this grace into us. Baptisme consecrates us to the most holy Trinity, makes us the children of God, members of Jesus Christ, Temples of the Holy Ghost, and holy Vessells which bear Jesus Christ, who dwells in us.

And the Eucharist (which is among the Sacraments as the Sun among the Stars) gives God to us, and with him all the greatness of beaven, elevates us and unites us, to God, changes and makes us little gods; What would ye more? Why is God think you so profuse of his gifts, of his graces, of himself, but to operate in you all that I have faid, to give you a life and actions conformable to the being whereto he hath elected you? Let us weigh these truths at our leisure, and study to attain to the perfection that God requires of us. Let us take care, that all our actions be holy and worthy of God, and let us not be carryed away by the humour, or rather by the infidelity of fuch as ignorantly despise these important truths, and necessary exercises.

The third Prerogative.

CHAP. VI.

Of the happy Commerce and Society that Jesus Christ will have with Christians by the Mys stery of the Incarnation.

The holy Trinity, having confecrated the Christian by Baptisme, adopted and received him as a son, enters into a particular society with him, and by divers Mysteries, which the eternall Word hath operated upon earth; God enters into a Communication with men, lives and converses with them: So Saint Paul, speaking to new Christians; Ye are no more strangers and forreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the houshold of God.

Let us stay here to contemplate this benefit: Adam being fallen from the happy estate of grace by his rebellion against God, no sooner tasted the Apple of disobedience, but he felt the punishment of his sin, and was at the same time driven out of Paradise, and banished the happy commerce and holy familiarity which he had with God. This exile was the greatest rigour wherewith the divine Justice could take vengeance on his sin: This separation made his estate miserable, and the condi-

tion of his children most unhappy. We should in this malediction and just divorse for ever have continued, if the Son of God had not come to re-establish all things, to return us to God, and to restore us with much advantage all other happiness that we lost by sin: So that as the Apostle saith, where sin abounded, grace did Rom. 5. much more abound: for we enter into a fami-20.3 liarity and communion with God, far more holy and divine then that of Adam by Jesus Christ, we converse with God, go to him, are with him, worthy the Spirit and Grace of

Christianity.

Few value this truth; men who only follow their own wayes, nourished with earth onely, to whom the delicates of heaven are unsavory, can never relish this grace, nor be sensible how much the presence of God is necessary. Therein appears the corrupt estate of this Age; all creatures refent the presence of their Creator; Nature it self hath engraven in the bottom of our essence, a defire of the presence of God: The most barbarous Nations, forced only by this instinct, in the blindness of their false Religion, sought, esteemed, and desired some visible mark of the presence of those they call their gods. None but those of this Age, have an indifference to these truths, forget God, mind onely their own actions in this world, and are igno-

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rane of the happiness of Heaven, and de-

fpife it.

To awaken and draw us forth of this darkness, consider that Faith teaches us, that the bappiness of the Swints confists in feeing themselves to be in the company of God, and the greatest recompense God promises to our travels, is to make us partakers of his glery, to raife us to his greatness, to enter into an eternall communion with us. I will, faith Christ to his Father, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; implying the fociety and communion of God with us, and promiling, that eternity shall never separate him from him that ferves him.

Now, if the bappines of the blessed in their estate of glory consists in the presence and familiarity of God, we cannot doubt but the bappiness of the just upon earth consists in knowing how to preserve themselves in this desireable familiarity and presence of God: The intent of the Son of God at his coming into the world, and becoming an Inhabitant thereof, was, to fantifie it by his prefence, and oftablish his power therein, and dwell with us to the end of the world, as he promised at his death. This is it that he wrought by the mysterie of the Incarnation, making himself. man, to live among men: For this cause in the Sacrament of the Eucharift, he becomes

Mat. 28. .00

the food of man, communicates to his abundant graces, inriches us with his gifts, that by all these endearments and singular favours he might separate us from the creatures, and reduce us to a divine society and communication with him.

Let us confider these two mysteries of our Faith and Love, mysteries which give God to

us, and cause us to dwell with God.

The last is the mysterie of the Incarnation, a mysterie of Love, an eternall mysterie; for God shall be man, and man God for ever; a mysterie causing God to live the life of man, and man the life of God, which between God and man, effects an union and faciety so divine and intimate, that he could not do any thing more boly, nor defire any more intimate, fince it is substantial and personall, and shall subsist eternally. Entring further into the confideration of this Mystery, we shall fee evident figns of this holy Communion. God makes here a new World (as the Scriprime calls it) a World of Grace, and of holioufs, a World which he governs by a new condust and providence. For whereas before God confining himfelf within himfelf, fpoke not to the World, but by his Prophets; now by the accomplishment of this Mystery, he comes out of himself, speaks to us, and infruits us by his Sonne. Four thousand years he he guided the World and his Church onely by his Angels the Interpreters and Oracles of his droine will. Now Jefus guides his Church by himfelf, he infuses holy motions into our fouls, by his spirit, (alwayes holy) he governs all, is present with all, and is found by all. What presence or commerce with God would you desire greater? what greater society then that of the word, by the Mystery of the incarnation? To know it more particularly, consider these Circumstances.

First, in this Mystery God lives the life of man, and man the life of God, a life of so-ciety, a life humanely divine, and divinely humane, for Jesus is God and man, in Jesus we adore and acknowledge two lives, one of

God in man, another of man in God.

Secondly, by this ineffable union, God communicates himself to man, and by this communication appropriates to himself all that is of man with such wonderful wisdom, that, not dishonouring his divine greatness, he takes upon him all the lowness of man, and subjects himself so really to our infirmities, that we say God is dead, God is born, &c. and man by a happy exchange is lifted up to all the greatness of God; inthron'd in the bosom of the eternal Father, where he eternally enjoyes the proper glory of God. Let every tongue confess, that in Jesus Christ by that

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that hypostaticall union, accomplished in the Mystery of the incarnation, man enjoyes the

glory of God, his greatness, light, and life.

Thirdly, As for the life and divine mysteries of the Sonne of God, we see he presented it to us the space of thirty three years, conversing with us as one of us; was an Infant in his first appearing, laboured in his youth, did live and eat with sunners in his may faring life. He disdained not to succour the infirm in his miraculous life. In a word, he resigned himself into the hands of sinners a Sacrifice, and was offered a holy offering on the Crosse, for the sins of the World, (O wonderfull!) he died between two Thieves in the company of men, so much pleased with the society and commerce of men.

What Religion ever had the presence of its God so visible? what being was ever advanced to so great an honour? To none but the Christian is this great favour granted, a Commerce so sacred, that it makes man, God, and God, man. By the ineffable mystery of the incarnation, God unites the Earth to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth. The God of Heaven dwells upon the Earth, according to that of St. John, The word was made John 14. sless, and dwelt among st us, all nature rejoyced at this happiness. St. John transported with love and joy, representing to the

world

faith, It is the same God that we have heard, that we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked on, and our hands have handled. So true is it, that God by the mystery of the incurnation is with us, and converses amongst us, after a society wholly divine, and onely proper to the state of a Christian.

CHAP. VII.

Of the uses Christians ought to make of Grace proceeding from the Mystery of the Incarnation.

IN pursuit of these proposed Truths, what may we judge to be the intentions of God, but that his will is, that we should enter into a boly and divine society with him, and that we should separate our selves from all that may binder or prophane this boly conversation with him, since that Jesus Christ thinks of us, converses with us by his divine mysteries, unites himself unto us, and abaseth himself to be as one of us, to be among us, we ought likewise to think of none but him, to converse with none but him, and like the Apostle; dwelling upon Earth to have our Conversation in Heaven.

Justin Martyr, shewing what Christians ought

to

live not according to the body, they duell upon the Eurob, but their Conversation is in Heaven. This God requires of us, this we ought to be in the state of Christianity; this is the use we ought to make of the spirit and grace stowing from the Mystery of the incurnation.

But alass, it is pitty that Jefus being now revealed unto us, living with us and amongst us, we apply thereto so little of our selves, of our thoughts, and of our love, and busic our selves in things so small, prophane and mean, even such as are unworthy of man! Let us do like him: Love made him forget himself to converse with us, let us come out of our selves, and forget all things, that we may raise our selves to him, that all our content may be in him.

Moreover, the state of the Grace of this Mystery, obliges us to be holy, seeing Jesus Christ with whom we converse is holy. The Apostle says, as he that hath called you is holy, a per the ye also holy in all manner of conversation, is speaking, walking, working, and whatsoever you do. He that lives after any other manner, saith St. Cyprian, then holily, dishonours the title of a Christian, and is a reproach to Jesus Christ. Let such as believe not sandity necessary for all Christians, as well

well as those who live included in Cloysters, confider these words.

We see in the Mystery of the incarnation, that the Sonne of God enters into Commerce and fociety with us, dwells with us, is cloathed with our humanity; God is made man, that man might be made God, not by fimple denomination, as God faid to Moses, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Kings in the Scripture are stiled Gods, but really, and by a being which deifies them. For as they are true Children of God by Grace, and as truly children by Gruce as Christ is by Nature, so they are Gods by Grace as Jefus is God by Natwe. And if there be any who find this Truth difficult, let him confider with St. Augustin, that it is no harder for God to make a man truly God by Grace, then it was for him to cause the Son of God to become truly man; neither is there less repugnance in making man God by Grace, then in making God man by the Mystery of the Incarnation. Since then by this Mystery of Love, God is made man, why by an emanation of the fame Mystery may not man be God? And as by this fociety, union and life, which the Sonne of God hath undertaken; the nature of man is the highest, most divine and greatest communication that God could give; fo hath it effects wholly conformable to what it A DIY

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is s for as the Mystery was onely operated for God's glory and mans advancement, so it produceth infallibly the effects of glorifying God in a manner worthy of God, seeing man, that is God adores God, and advances men to such a dignity, as to be able to be Gods, and Children of God by Grace.

Reflecting upon so eminent a truth, do we not fee clearly, how hely and perfect the life of a Christian ought to be, being called to fo high a dignity, a Preregative onely proper to a Christian? If a Christian must with all his power lay hold of this estate whereto God hath advanced him, he ought also to have a particular care to become worthy to entertain this grace, and to dwell with Tefus Christ in a great union and dependance, that he may receive of him all the effects of this divine Mystery, by whom all must operate in our fouls, and he must particularly dispose himfelf to receive the effects and Graces which uncessantly flow from this Mystery of Love and Communication; for on this fidelity of our fouls, and on our union with Jefus Chrift, depends the foundation of all Good we can hope for. And as all the happiness of the Creature confifts in his being confirmed to his God, and dependant on him more then the beames on the Sun; fo all the happiness of a Christian, is to be bound and united in a most intimate

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intimate fociety with Jefus Christ, from whom being separated, he becomes amorthy of the estate whereto God hath destined him, deprives himself of all good, and can hope for nothing leffe then a world of mischiefs. The greatest pain of the dammed is to fee themselves separated from God, banished his company for ever, and the happy communion of the Saints. In like manner, the greatest evil that can arrive to Christians, is to feel themselves far from Jesis Christ, separated from him from whom they have all, and deprived of the defired effects, which they might receive by his conversation. Let us take heed we fall not into this mischief, and fince nothing can separate us from Jesus Christ but sin, let us shun sin more then bell it felf; And fince nothing deprives us of the finits and bappy effects which we ought to receive of the fociety and commerce with Jefus Christ by his divine Mysteries, but the Love of the World, bufiness and commerce with the Creatures; Let us strongly endeavour to feparate our felves from it, and couragiously quit it (at least in our affection) if we cannot otherwise for the Love of Jefus Christ; and let us quit that for the love of Vertue, which we shall one day be constrained to do by the necessity of Death.

The fourth Prerogative.

CHAP. VIII.

Of another kind of Society and Union of Jesus Christ with Christians, by the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Nation, we have nothing more worthy confideration in Christianity, then the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which God shewes the last touches of his love, and makes us most clearly see the designs he hath on our souls.

Faith teaches us, that by the Sacrament of the Eucharist, Love transports Jesus, out of himself from the throne of his greatness to our baseness, causing him to live with us and in us, such is the purpose of Jesus Christ, as he himself said, as the institution of this divine Sacrament, to establish between him and us, a mutual cohabitation, that by this Mystery of Love, he may enter into a true society with us, be united to us, and continue his life of conversation among us men to the end of the world.

He doth perform this promise of dwelling with us and in us, by this high Sacrament, which

which according to the Doctrine of the Church, is an imitation and extension of the mystery of the Incarnacion to every Christian. This mysterie shews the commerce, communion and particular refidence which God hath in every one of us: For as the communication which the Son of God hath made of himfelf to our nature united to his divine Person by the mysterie of the Incarnation, is an imitation and extension of the supreme communication on, adorable and facred fociety in the holy Trinity among the Persons, and consequently is the most high and divine communication that God could do out of himself; for the Eucharist which is an extension of the Incarnation in every one of us in the most divine and abundant communication that God can do in the order of grace: For Jefus Christ in this ineffable facrament, gives himself wholly to every one of us, and advances us, and by his vertue, draws us wholly to him, by his power transforms us into his qualities, makes us heavenly and eternall like himself, establishes his Throne and dwelling in us by this divine mysterie.

Moreover by this Sacrament of union, God is present with us, is among st us, and united to every one of us after a manner so admirable and divine, that we being not able to give it a name, call it Sacramentall, as an Union wholly

wholly hid from our eyes, and covered ander the shadow of Faith neverthelesse, a true Union an Union that contains in itsfelf and fettles in us the prefence of God, makes us to be in God, and God in us. Thus God is altogether upon the earth in the midft of his People by the Eucharift, and he is in Heas ven in the midft of the Angells and Saints, in the throne of his Majesty, filling at the same time both Heaven and Earth with his glory, presence, and grace. Briefly this Saarament of Love gives us God, causes us to live with him, and of him, puts us into a commerce and fociety with him, and that with fo much priviledge and advantage, as we fay, that in this Sacrament of the love and fulneffe of God, we enjoy Jesus more happily and more perfectly then the world did heretofore in the time of his Incarnation during his mortall life upon Earth Helmin Palantern of the live schooling

I will more clearly demonstrate it that we may the more esteem so great a benefit, and the excellency of the state of Christianity, whereto we are called by the mercy of God. on ve

First They who lived in the time that Jesus conversed visibly upon Earth, sow him, but did not enjoy him, few persons knew him; he was not then feen but in his lownefs, as fayes the Apostle, in the likeness of sinfull

flesh.

Rom, 8.3. fleft. In the Eucharift we fee him by Faith, a light as true and more infallible then that of the Sunne it felf; we do adore him in his greatrafe, in the state of that glory which he hath in the bosom of his Father ; we handle him we touch him we eat him. After this manner he is ours. he will have us to be his s he is in us and we in him, we live of him, and for him as he lives for us, and the life that he lives in as is fo divine, that he compoles it to the life that he leads in the bosom of his Fathern Now what more folid union, what more intimate fociety, what more divine commerce can be imagin'd, what greater can we require many was not in large on olin of God

Secondly, During his life here, he taught and redeemed Man-kind, he dyed and merited for them, but he gave nothing, or if he gave it, was little in comparison of the liberal profusions which he makes of himself in this inestable Sacrament, where he merits no more (for it is not the time) but gives himself to Christians, and with himself all the treasures of grace and holiness. This is a Sacrament of Communication and communicates to every one of us, a life of grace, the seed of glory. In a word, he communicates himself here as he communicates himself to the Saints in the state of Glory, yet after a different manner, and conformable

to the diversity of the states of the Church milliant and Tryamphant. Add to this, that in the time of the Incarnation Jefus Christ was upon the earth, without power, covered with our infirmities, living in our weakness, subject to the empire of death. Now we possess and enjoy him in the bosom of his Father, in the extent of his power, having in his hand the conduct of Heaven and Earth. Then he was in the World in poverty and privation; but in this Sacrament of Love and communication, he enjoyes the fulness of his greatness, and is onely here, that he may communicate them.

Thirdly, Here on earth during his mortal lity, he was feen but sometimes, and that furcofficely, for some saw him in his infancy and no more, others in his youth, some felt the effects of his power in working of miracles, many were witnesses of his death and fuffer. ings. All this past, and was feen but in a finall part of the World, in Palestine, in Jerusalem; all the rest of the World was in darkness, and faw not this beautiful Sun, nor enjoy de this agreeable light. But in the Mystery and Sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus as given to all the World, all the people of the Earth enjoy him from the East to the West, from the North to the South, there is no Nation where the Christians possess not Jesis Christ, and in him all the estates and severall Mysteries of Mat. 30.

his life, all that he is and shall be eternally. Jefus in his life on Earth, was in the quality of a fervant, as he faith of himself, He came not into the World to be ministred unto, but to minifter; also he was subject to Angels, to men, even to the very devills, when he gave them power over his life, in the time of his fufferings. But in this divine Sacrament, he is as in his Empire, and in his Paradife; we there adore him as our spouse, governing his Church, like the Sun enlightening our fouls, like a Prince, establishing the Kingdom of his grace, and the power of God in our frits, we there acknowledge him as a propitiation for humane kind, rendring to the eternal Father the honour that is due to him. In brief, in this Mystery of Love, we behold Jefus Christ, as in the throne of his greatness, where he receives throughout the World, the adoration of his people, and the duties of our fouls. In this manner the Earth is made a Heaven, and we have our God with us and in us. Let us confider these truths, that so we may profit thereby, and let us fee what this divine bounty will work in us, which makes fuch an abundant communication of it felf in this Sacrament. Mark to see and will be appreciately and

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CHAP. IX.

The Design of Jesus Christ upon Christians in this most high Sacrament of the Bucharist.

What think we God requires of us for so powerfull a work of his Love? What design can he have upon Christians in so divine a communication, so generall a profusion of his gifts.

First, he will change us, (a happy change for us) for he changeth us into himself, according to Saint Austin: I shall be changed into

thee, but thou shalt not be changed into me.

Secondly, he does thus change us, not so much by a gift, or created grace, as by his holy bumanity, and the power of his divinity.

Thirdly, the Son of God, effecting this change out of the excess of love, make use of this means to unite himself to us, and to assume a new power over us, as of a thing that belongs to him. For having by his body taken possession of our members as his, and made us members of his body, sless of his fless, and bone of his bone, by his divine sacrament of union, love, and unity, he assumes power over us by a right to him for ever.

When we shall consider these three Cir-E 3 cumstances, cumstances, what can we think or say, but that God will have us no longer men, but gods? He will have us to go out of our selves to be in him, and cease to be that which we are, to be what he is? O how great is this! How cleerly doth the boliness of the Christian estate appear? seeing then this benefit is so heavenly, and the communication so divine and wonderful in this inestable sacrament, we are by consequence obliged to make uses conformable to the thing it self, and to the designs of God, of

which I shall propose some.

First, That your fole contentment be to be with God, who takes fuch pleasure to be with you; that all things be unfavory to you, that all the pleasures of the world be contrary to your heart; renounce all lying and vanity. Let even your smallest entertainments and ordinary actions be in him, who is in the bottom of your heart, who testifies such a singular love unto you. This practice and affection will not be difficult, if you be truly disposed to vertue; for being vertuous it will be hard to take recreation in any created thing, not in the least unprofitable word, because a perfect Christian takes no pleasure but in God, and that which is of God, for being a member of Jesus Christ, as such he is to act holily, he must live of the spirit of Jesus Christ, no way recreate himself but in him, and in boly and vertuous things.

Secondly, Recollect and form often in your foul a great and continual defire that God be in you all that he ought to be and that you cease to be all that you are. Have a great defire to loofe your felf, and to go out of your felt, and that your being be annihilated and confummated in that of Jefur, who is in you. This is the point whereto you must arrive, if you will that God should poffes you.

Thirdy, Defire and require, that Jefus christ destroy in you, all that is contrary to God, that he establish in you the Kingdom of God; that he take from you the dominion which felf-love, the vanity of your nature, and your inclination usurp over you town or I simme

and the creatures.

Fourthly, Refign your felf to the will of Jesus Christ, who by this adorable sacrament of Love will receive you into himself, and place you in his life and his be-

ing animos

Abandon then your felf to the define that he hath to poffest you, a desire as great and perfect as the Love wherewith he gives himfelf to you is infinite. Pray him to destroy in this present life the being that you we and abuse, that by the power of his spirit and love; and by the vertue of this ineffable sacrament he may make you what he is, that is to fay, Love, Life, and Truth. Behold what God E 4

requires

requires of you; if we regard intentively the effence and the excellency of this mysterie, if by the spirit of Faith we weigh the effects it produces in us, it will be easie to acknowledge them, and foon shall we be constrained to confess that this facrament of Love doth appropriate us wholly to God, draws us from our felves and the world, and feparates us from the commerce of creatures, that we may be knit in heart and spirit to Jesus Christ, defifing all things for his love and glery; fo shall be verified the word of the Son of God to his Father in the excess of his Love, speaking to him not onely of his Apostles, but of all good Christians; They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. This is the spirit of Christianity, the excellency of this divine estate.

That we may the better remember, this you shall see in a little Pidure: First, the grace and spirit of Christianity consecrates us to God, and imprints in us a character of the power of Jesus Christ, to whose Empire we must be subject for ever, and must undergo to all eternity both in heaven and earth the state of service and subjection to the spirit, grace and conduct of Jesus.

Secondly, The grace of Christianity makes us the children of God by mercy, and gives us right of inheritance to the greatness and

true

have no more part in the world, because it is the beritage of the true children of Adam, but we have right to the Possession of God who is himself the beritage of his children.

bearts, and our affections from our selves, and all creatures, to unite us to God: it gives us right to enter into familiarity and alliance with the Son of God, who making himself man by the Incarnation, would be amongst us, to the end that we might be with him. He enters into society with men, invests himself with our miseries & infirmities, to communicate to us his life his spirit and greatness. Thus by the grace of this mysterie, we go out of our own Interests to enter into the Interest of Jesus Christ, whereof the Apostle speaking of the things of the world, he saith, I count phil. 3. 8. them but dung that I may win Christ.

Fourthly, In brief, by the state of Christianity, we are advanced to the participation of God, who will be all in us, that we may be in him, and Jesus Christ by his body and blood which he giveth us in the Eucharist, doth elevate and unite us to God, makes us live by his life, communicates to us all that he is, that he may be all things to us, that the world

may be nothing to us.

Thus the grace of Christianity unites us

to Jefus Christ, replenishes us with his life and fpirit, makes us another himfelf, and therefore obliges us to go out of our felves and the world to be in Christ Jesus. I know we must be in the world and make use of the world, fo long as it shall please God to continue us in this place of captivity; but we must not be of the world, we must live here as in a place of passage, and make use of all in the world, as of a winter garment, ready to put it off when the Sun of righteoufness thall come to his meridian, when it shall pleafe God. Let us use all the creatures as a necesfary medicine to the present state of our infirmities and occasions; but let it be withall, loathfom unto us, as violating our Love, which defires nothing but God, which takes delight in nothing but God, which affires to nothing, and bepes in nothing but God.

The conclusion of the first Part,
What the life of a Christian ought to be.

Behold here the Excellencies of Christianity, which we have proposed in few words, as having no further design nor intention in this volume, then to shew that the life of a Christian ought to be conformable to the state of grace, and dignity, whereto he is advanced by sesus Christ. Now to enter into this knowledge, it suffices that we see what we are.

This

This is that which I defign a to demonstrate in this first part, proposing as in a little Tables, the esence, dignity and eminenty of the grace of Christianay, which I have done, briefly, expressing onely the principal Trush of this fibrest, leaving the rest to the piery and confideration of those that would profit perate in us that which natura

thereby.

Now if we look back with the eye of Faith upon that which hath been faid, we shall clearly see what a Christian life ought to be, and shall know that the delign of Jefus Christ, informing his Church, hath been to consecrate, to appropriate to himself, and to unite himself divinely to our fouls, and to feparate them from themselves, and from all creatures, that by a happy revolution he may be in us, and we in him, we may live in him, and of him as he lives in his Father, of the life of his Father, that so he may reftere us to his Father, and re-unite us to himself, from whom we were feparated by him, by being our own, and having relation to the Creature.

Herein is comprised the perfection of a Christian life, whereof we cannot speak more then in the words of St. Paul, ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; a Col.3.3. paffage which contains an apparent contradiction. If we are dead, how can our life be

hid

God, who is the life of our fouls, how are we dead? The Apople meanes that our life is life and death; our life is a life of grace, which is the true life of fouls, and much better then the foul is the life of our bodies, and the proper effect of the grace of Christianity, is to operate in us that which natural death doth. By death the foul is separated from the body, and all things in the world. So grace should separate us from our selves, from all things, from sin, that, being wholly so separated, we may be dead to our selves, and to all things, that we may, live in God and of God.

This expression of the Apostle, further shews all the properties of a Christian life, the end whereof is, that, being separated from all we may be in Jesus Christ, that is to say, united by an indissoluble Union to Jesus Christ, life of his life, and be referred with him to

the glory of the most boly Trinity.

The life of a Christian, St. Paul saith is hid, because it is indeed hid from the sight of the World, which neither sees it as it is, nor esteems it; and (because it is little, humble, and abject) disdains to behold & to take notice of it, as unwarthy the name and society of men. They that will live Christianly, will not subject themselves to the corruption of the men of this age; so this life is hid from the sight, and more

more from the power of this world, for the foul that liveth christianly, is above all hul mane power, and infentible to all contempt and confusion; and as the Diamond continues entire, and strengthened by the violence of blower; so the perfect christian remains more content in the violence of Tempeation; more affured in the motions of diffrate, more firm amidft the batteries of afflictions even Profesity changeth not his fpirit, he is alike in all things, for by grace and true Christian vertues, the soul is raised above all things, and lives in God, Te are dead, and yet your life is hid with Jefus Christ in God . 01 Such is the life of a christian according to St. Paul, a life that imitates that of fefur Christ upon earth, who according to the Oracles of the Prophets o was despised and rejected of men, a Man of forrow, and acquaints ed with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despifed, and we esteemed him not. When Hell, the World, Devill, finners, thought to triumph over him, and ravish both his Jo. 10.18. honour and life at the fame time, he triumphs over them, shewing that he bath power (as he faith) to lay down his life f and he bath power to take it again at his pleafure. Thus the dife of Jesus Christ is hid from the eyes of men, who know him not, and from their power, feeing he triumphs overbis Enemies vover death Christ

Eph.4.23, 93, 24.

desthand fin Such ought to bathe life of Christian. St. Paul faith the fame in other termes, when he exhorts the Ephelians, that they put off sancerting the former conversation, the old Man which to corrupt according to the da central lufters and be renewed in the spirits of their mind, and that they put on the new Man, which after God is created in righteoufne for and true bolines This is the first Protestation we make in Baptifine, in which folemp action, before that we are confecrated to the holy Triwith received and made the children of God, we make a particular protestation, to renounce Adam and the World, and adhere to Jefis Chrift, to Separare our felves from the one to unite our felves to the other. So in this action to bely and happy, we uncloath our falves of the ency to cloath us again with the other, that is the first step we make into the state of Christianity, according to St. Paul. And if we believe his Dollring, we fee that the perfection of a Christian and all his happis refle confifts in adhering to Jefur Christ, to be united to him, and cloathed with him. For as all the grandeur of humane nature (which was chosen in the Mysterie of the Incarnation to be the nature of God) confifts in being wited to the word, which fublifteth in him, and operates by him: fo all the perfection of a shriftien foul, confits in dwelling in lefter disable Christ

Christ in adhering to him, and operating by hims all the pertection of a thriftian foul confifts, in that it denells in Chrift, that it adheaves to him, that it lives of his life, and opes rates not but by his fpirit, ma ton are we and

Now this cannot be, but when the Soul is divided from it felf, and from all creatures 3 Col. 3.9. for according to St. Paul, We are to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the I. mage of him that created him. Whence it followeth, that abnegation and uncloathing, is the principal point of christian perfection, so neceffary, that St. Bermard faith s It bad been better for us never to have been, then to dwell in our felves, and to our felves; for the greatest misfortune of the foul is to fee it felf feparated from God. But God comes not into, neither dwells in the fool, till fuch time as it goeth out of itself, uncloather and amuhilates. it felf .: And the greater its annibilation is, the more it makes place for God. If it take but little away, God fills it with little, if it deprive it felf of much, God fills it much, and without doubt he will take it up, and dwell wholly in it, if the foul do annihilate, and wholly uncloath it felf.

We see and adore this proceeding of God in the Mysterie of the Incarnation, the cause and example of the life of our fouls. For the

the eternall mord chooling humane nature, to unite himself unto it, and to operate in and by it our redemptions would uncloath it of its own substance and humans person, to shew us that we are not acceptable to God, if we do not abandon our felves's and that, if we divest our selves of our selves, and deprive our felves of all created things, God will fill us with divine things, for Grace as well as Nature, abhorres vacuity a construction to ability from

Let w learn then to deprive our felves of bumane things, that we may be inriched with divine. Let us go out of our felves, and quit the commerce that we have with the creatures, to be in Jesus Christ, to enter into society and communion with God. Let us renounce our own fpirits and government, to leave our felves to that of Jefus Christ, and fuffer him to live and raign in us, according to what he truly defigned of us. In brief, let us divest our felves, of our felves, to re-invest our selves with the Sonne of God. Herein consists the bappiness of our fouls, and that Christian perfection, that we ought to fearch for here upon earth : The necessity and practife whereof, are in the following Treatifer. as of the all that

We want adors the meriday of Cod

THE My mir the in an allow, the carte and extends of the life of our feult. For

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the Divinity, bad to liberally inriched thins

THE SECOND PART.

Wherein are proposed the sundry Motives which oblige (bris Stians to Perfection.

The Obligation that we have to acquire true Vertues, wherein consists the life of the Soul, and the inward life of a Christian.

AN being in honout abideth not, but is compared unto Pia 49.12 the Beafts that periffi. Thus David, describing the deplorable estate of man after fin, a

fad condition, a miserable fall! which hath deprived man of the gifts of God, and the favours wherewith the powerful hand of

the Divinity, had so liberally inriched him, and degraded him of all honour, and put him into a condition of meanners, impotener and error. This goodly spirit of man, or rather this man all spirit, is now nothing but flesh this beautiful Soul which breath'd for nothing but Heaven, entertained it felf to deliciously, in the knowledge of infattible Truths, and was inriched with contemplation of the greatest of God; as with Divine Dew, and heavenly Manna, after so deplorable a fall, obstinately links himfelf to the perishable goods of this World, believes in lies, leeks after vanities, and can no more elevate himself to God; so miserable and impotent hath sinne made him. Quphappinels which cannot tofficiently be bewailed! Man who by the happiness of his creation, had eyes to contemplate onely his Creator, and converting himself wholly to him, had no heart but to dove him, no spirit but to adhere to him; after so fatall a cast, wholly turn'd away from God, regards nothing but himself, is wholly converted to the Creature, lives as a Beaft, onely upon the Earth, and like a Beast wish

the effate whereto the finner is reduced, he declares him uncapable of the knowledge

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ledge of things which are of the Spirit of God. The natural man, faith he, receiveth not I Cor. si the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolistings unto him a neither can be know them. because they are spiritually discerned. Hence doubt, least the wayes I intend to propose. which are according to the Spirit of God, appear too high, or above the capacity of our spirits. I confess they are so, if we look upon man in the state of sin, impotency, and the corruption of his Nature. But we shall find the contrary, if we confider that the Sonne of God came into the World to relieve man after his fall, to restore him those gifts with advantage which he loft, to tender him capable of God. In brief, he was made man to teach man the true way to love and ferve God; he gives the power. having feeled in his Church an inexhaustible Treasure of Graces, whence all souls may draw strength in their weakness, succour in their necessity, and ability in the very impotency of their nature. Here, of Tefus man and God, we are to learn the way to love, and adore, and to ferve God; from him we must have the grace to do it. We must in and by Jesus operate above our strength, above our being, and natural power, and nothing ought to feem difficult to us, or impossible for him, seeing he gives 115

us his grace and fpirit in abundance to ac-

complish it.

To believe this, we must look back upon the defigns of the Son of God, in the Profufion of his gifts and graces, and leafurely examine with the eye of Faith, what he will operate in us, by his grace and divine communications. At the first view we shall fee that Grace draws from us our impotency, advances us above our nature, gives us a new being, a new life, a life intire and wholly hid in God, a life proper to the state of Christianity, according to which all Christians ought to live. The Son of God speaking to the Sumaritan, and in her to all the faithful, makes a Discourse hereof worthy to be confider'd, expressing an intenti-Joh.4. 23: on to establish his Church. The boure shall come, (fayes he) and now is, wherein the true Worshippers Stall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, for the Father feeketh (u. b to wor-(hip him. The reason he adds, God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth. What more powerful and clear tellimony of the will of God; who tries and elects Souls that worthip him, in spirit and truth? If he himself doth choose them, and call them to this new life, is it not necessary, that in pursuit of this election, he give them grace necessary to arrive at fuch an effate? Let us confider this passage, and ponder all the words of it. perience of our outs incopaci

Jefan Christ thews us that our life must be holy, and fevered from the creature feeing that we must ferve God in Truth, without amusing our selves with the vanities and things of the Earth, which are nothing but lying. Intruth, that is to fay, conformable to the Greatness of God, and to that principle whence the Soul takes power to ferve God, the grace, spirit, and dispositions of Jesus Christ, the spirit of Truth.

We learn further, that if perfection of this life is inward, pure, holy, and absolutely divine, feeing it is, and subsists in the adoration of God, who, as be is a Spirit pure and bely, will be ferved and adored in

Spirit.

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it free coeroero the Samaritan 2. Jesus christ reaches, that we must wait upon him for this Grace, necessary to accomplish his Commands, who requiring of us a life so pure and perfect, obliges himself to give us necessary Graces to arrive unto it, fince that without him , we can do nothing of that which he teaches. In brief, we fee how much we are obliged to require this grace, to fearch after it, to fubmit our felves unto it, and to endeavour to become worthy of it, We must not in a matter so

Spikenall Treujuse. Pate II.

perience of our medication demnite our felves by the spirit of Faith, we must hope in him who commisses above our felves by the spirit of thands nothing impossible, who give him the spirit hands nothing impossible, who give him the demands a demands of the dema

History and which those fouls, that have any desite to live Christianly, ought first of all to learn. But it happens quite contrary, the understanding of men is so corrupt, that they desire not these internal solid vertues, not require them of God, and, which is worse, many think it unnecessary to possess them; and that such a life as we call interiour, is for few persons, as if Jesus Christ speaking to the Samaritan, had spoken onely to Her, and not to the whole the in mpossible to attain them; as not believing the Apossle, who saith, I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,

a manifelt error wherein many lose themdelves, in not hifficiently confidering what they daily see by common experience for before their eyes. If weakest Women, Virgms and Children, have had strength sufficient, not withstanding their young and tender

tenue

Spherenall Trengue.

render bodies, to embrace to rures almost insupportable, and have by Grace been frengthied to overcome those difficulty, why should not we believe allo, that abay doming out felves to the power and colleges of God, we may have sufficient gives of God, we may have sufficient gives and capacity to account these vertices? If By the help of grace they can attain strength of body to support the iff gours of a penittent life, wherefole by favour of the same grace, may hot we arrive to the postession of that true vertice where in a Christian life dots consistent in the life consistent in a Christian life dots consistent in the christian life dots consistent life.

of life? all the oblicated of the metally confider it proceeds from hor linder landing what is the interiour life of the Soll, affiny believe it a kind of an abstract life half of the other World; a life with of the life which it an enemy to horizate holder? Others confider it as a life with opolitable to lite of the order words, and macdefilial contemplation; the order of the species some denderno it is of the six he pleases. Some denderno it is of there is fay it is impossible, much believe a difficult. Let us not infift upon words, they are explicated to all fences; let us onely say, that the life we call interiour, is not other then the life of the soul, the life of the

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of

of God, the life of his grace, the mother of Il vertues, Thus then the interior life is other then a vertuous Christian life, to ward and spiritual man must sear God from of all that is in Christianity and in the Church of God must be vigilant to do nothing to displease God, careful to preserve s Soul and Confcience in the purity of grace and as the Apostle faith, having a feem of God from the bottom of his heart, and of all that belongs to God, and to carry mean efteem of himfelf and all Creatures. To live in this manner, is that which I call thing, and to reach fouls any other life, is to betray them.

Now who fees not that all Christians are

blow who sees not that all Christians are obliged to this kind of life, if they will be laved; who sindes not now how much this life is casier then it was represented, and all together contrary to what was expected? Let us then take a firm resolution to emphrace it, and to give our selves with all our Souls to him, who hath given himself to us, the hath right and power to live in us, to do in us, and of us all that he pleases. Let us onely take care that we commit our selves

to

Hebr. 13.

achis conduct, and to the operation of his holy Spirit, and being affifted by his Graces Let us chearfully endeavour the acquisition of Christian vertues ; Let us so order, that grace may reign in us, according to the design of God, that God may dwell in us, as in a living tubernacle, which Jesus Christ hath consecrated by his blood, and we shall see by experience, that with the Apostle, We are able to Phil.4.13. do all things through Jefus Christ, who strengthenthing but God, who is be that filleth aloundin

ma for ever Merendani extraordinary; for they

faith the Avolle; whom it feeken to and

polyelictic as are its

That the possession of God is the end of a Christian life, whereto we cannot arrive, but by the It grace of Jefus Christ. Warnen Befred in bas

we confider what this love means, w D.Rfore I proceed, I must suppose that I speak to soulsidestrous to live vertually and perfectly in the state of Christianity, ascording to Jefus Christ, the Law and Rula. My address is to such who are faithfull Dispenfators of the gifts and graces of God, will make use thereof according to the defignes and intentions of the Son of God, endeayouring to profit a bundred fold.

The first thing that I ask of them, is, What is the end of the life and actions of a Christian?

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For,

Spirituall Tragase.

Part II.

For as in things naturall & artificiall, the first chought and knowledge of the workman, is the end of his work; fo in Piery, we must confider and know the end, and the life of christian actions, that knowing them we may resolve couragiously to undertake them, and of all that shall be proposed to us, or is never-

We know the end of a christian foul is no-Eph.1.23, thing but God, who is he that filleth all thall, faith the Apostle; whom it seeketh to, and possesseth as its sole happiness, and to enjoy him for ever. None reject this truth, though it appear high and extraordinary; for they that discourse ordinarily of Christian perfection, say all that it consists in the love of God, and in perfect charity, which is true. But if we confider what this love means, we shall find, that is in thing but the possession of God; for the late of God hath priviledge and pemer roughted God! who is effentiall love. This confidering this much, we hall find that perfection parties in love, which love gives us the posession of God; therefore the persettion of our journant be the live of God! He that will tempollished the wortherry of this, must know the greatness and dianity of God, from which monledge he fliatt learn what the life of our fools mult be, what our entertains

ments,

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wheney, and how holy during any ought to be. end, A haid necountry relieve, that the tha of our four being supernuturant, and nothing less then could havely, the weam allothat we multige to differ to this end; mit the paper - ? hatheratt and attome! They therefore was feek perfection in the enjoyment of this that, intell have a particular tare hot only to em Brace all actions and which thay conduct them, But Bun and contente all water and 12 befluous things which the forto attain to this end, and might detelt held, and 10 sands

We mint remember that we cannot within attitisent; north the ponemon of God, who is the perfection of a Christian "his fulnes," and the confirmmation of this fold y both of the com that brood will felf, by wrate atone and mercy; and according to the repulsion of God, but by his droine Light, and by a pectall Revelation; No man knoweth the Son, but the 27. Father, mither knowell any man the Father, fave the Son, and he to wbom the Son will rebeal him. And when a man fifall come to this knowledge, he can make no good ule of it, unless he be hided with a new favour; he cannot go to God, nor enjoy his grace or first, unless he be aided and guided by him who faith, I am the Way, the Truth, and Jo. 14.6. truths the

Spiritual Tressure. Pare II

the Life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me. And that which shows our greatest, im-patency of need of flesses Christ, and his grace, is, that without him, we can do nothing monthy and capable to approach unto Gud, and enable us to poles him : Without me, faith he, you can Tob. 15.5. do nothing. On the one fide the foul fees and confesses, that God is her perfection, her bappiness and beritage, that in him the hath all; that he alone is her sufficiency, her life and confummation; On the other fide the finds, that the cannot go to him, nor enjoy him, nor think of him, but by him, that Is to fay, by his grace, by his infinite mercy. The feels that the bears in the battom of her being, not only incapacity, impotency and feebliness, but of oppositiento grace, to the gifts and work of God, On the other fide. the carries the effects of Gods love, the knows the power of God over her, who can advance her to what degree of commanications it shall please him, and do in her and by her all that he pleases

In this confideration, man must adore the secret judgements, will, and designes of God over his Greature; he must humble himself in his bumility, and by his knowledge see into the little he is, the need he hath of God, and the misery of a Soul without grace. He must not content himselfe with the bare Knowledge of these truths

truthes without making use thereof; the first of God can furnish him with severall ways to doit. Behold here three Alls very profitable and necessary to be done as often as we can with ferious application.

1. The foul must refign it felf to grace, to all the designes and counsels of God over it, with a defire to depend efficaciously upon the fpirit and conduct of God, to follow all the ways, to undergo all the effects of the grace

and diffensations of God in hore in any simple

2. The foul must produce an all, whereby offering her confent to God, as much as is required; she must protest that she consents then and alwayes to all the operations of Jefus Christ in her, and to all the designes that he hath upon her, of what kind estate and manner foever they be. duri to sendmons

3. She must renounce within her felf fervently, all her right over her felf, her inchnations, interest, obstruction, and imperfections within her, imploring the bounty of Jefus, and the power of his spirit, to annihilate in her all her imperfections, to take from her all bindrances, opposite to the spirit, grace, and conduct of God. Lastly, she must study the practice of vertues when occasion shall prefent them, after the manner proposed, whereof we now begin to treat.

Stort out divid awo more exist Char.

truther without making use thereof; the spirit of God can furnish him with sever rall ways to dok! I has Mare three Altr

of the practificand means tobereby we may are rive to the possifier of God, of his grace and of fairly to the feet to stiril to fairly to

all the designer and councils of God overit Timuch imports foul that feek after Gody and would live in the perfection of Christian mity that they endeavour to enter and fettle themselves in good and solid dispositions for that God chiefly regards in us so and we are notignerant that the operations of Grate are alwayes proportioned to the difficition the puts or finds in the faul. Now amongst all despofitties, the most folid and necessary, the chief path of the foul to true vertile, is Love and knowledge of truth. We must love truth, and trongly adhere to it: we must wholly study to fill our firsts with the knowledge of this Trate, that it may be unto us a foundation ta Christianlife, a light in the direction and conduct of our actions. Therefore before I propose any practife, I alwayes put Truth for a foundation of Exercifes necessary to our conditt of God. I aftly, the must hitseidus

Let us then consider as a certain Principle that the more we all for our selves, and for the Principles of our being, and nature to conduction selves, or our own spirit, the more

we effrange our felves from God and by confequence from the and for which we are created from the perfection whereso we are obliged, The fairt which is in us is the fairts of Adam our nature, the nature of Adams therefore is it a nature become damnable by four, a spirit infused into us by the Serpent. possessing us in the consent of Adam. This fairif and nature is subject to the power and malice of the Devil and finne, and confequently cannot all but according to the pemer and malice whereto it is a flave for operation followes effence. As this being therefore is estranged from God; and enemy to him, for by nature we are born the children Eph. 2.3. of wrath, faith St. Paul) to it cannot act but against God. Now by this reducement, man is drawn out of this Captivity, freed from this bondage, and made a new subject to Graces he acts no more according to the Principle of his own being, but by the Principle of Grace, which gives him a new being making him a new Creature in Jefus Christ. To arrive to this Liberty, which we call the Labenty of Grace, and of the children of God, two things are requifite, the mercy or grace of God, and the confent and en operation of the faul. The Christian therefore that will live vertuously, must first give himself to God; offer him his will and intire confest to all the designes

and

designes he hath upon him, and to all the of him: Then he must fludy and labour to with-draw himself from this bondage, to shake off the yoak of fin, which oppresses and drags him whither it will to free himself, he must quit himfelf, that is, his imperfections, his paffions, inclinations, and, much more, finne; he must kill this spirit of Adam, and pluck it up by the root, that it may the better make room for the spirit of God; that this holy fpirit may live in him, and att by him, otherwife he can no way possess the true christian vertue, nor attain the perfection, whereto he is obliged, nor the end whereto he is created, the poseffion of God.

Whence it follows, that the first exercises whereto the foul must apply it felf, is to place it self in the liberty of grace, to draw it self out of the bondage of fin, and to annihilate in it self the spirit of Adam, which it carries in the very marrow of its bones. Here it must begin, all other exercises are but unprofitable without this, and all it does will be to no purpofe, unless it arrive to this point. For we must remember, that the vertue to be truly Christian, is the spirit of Jesus, who acts in us, and that the perfection of a Christian confists in love, a love that is never without the poffession of God; it is easie then to conclude

and a picket Christian, must make room for God in his heart, there establish God, there cause his spirit to rule and live. He must roccout, and expel all that is contrary and in entity to God, even all that is not God; for he that is not with me, faith Jesus Mat. it. Christ, is against me. The true exercise and principall care of a Christian consists herein, all others that abut not upon this, we must despise, saying with St. Paul, in Jesus Christ, meither consists availeth any thing, nor unit. Gal. 5.61

cumsifion, but faith which is by love.

Now the onely question is, how we may arrive to this happine s; herein is the difficulty. We fay it is by inward and outward mortification, by the fenfes, and by the fpirit, by vigilancy in all things, that we neither receive, confult, nor do any thing contrary to God, or that may difflease him; by prayer, by difcour fe. In fine, it is by the grace of God, for it belongs to God alone and Jefus Chrift, to make us free, and draw us out of the captivity of our felves and fin. If the Some Shall make you free, you shall be free indeed, faith Jo. 8.36; Jejus Chrift. It is an effect onely of the mercy of God, who alone can give us a new eftate, and reeftablish all in us. Wherefore when we have laboured and done all that we are able, we must think that we have defire done

done nothing, we must have recourse to grace : we must enter into an humble refentment of our misery, we must cry after jesus Christ for our relief. Herein it is good to torme often these following acts, or rather to carry them continually in the bottom of our hearts; we must defire, with a defire full of efficacy to be filled and poffeffed by Jefus Christ, to submit all to him, to require this grace of him with humility; to offer and prefent our selves to him for it, giving him from this time, and alwayes the confent that he requires of us, and when we find that he gives us the first fruits of his spirit, that he begins to live and move in us, then we must be faithful in correspondence thereunto, and preferve a great attention to his motions, and divine and inward operations.

2. We must often renounce our selves, our self-love, and our spirit, to sacrifice our selves before God, that is, to renounce our own Intentions, inclinations and dispositions, to live no longer, then in the holy will, intentions, divine and adorable dispositions of Jesus Christ. For as anciently, the victime was not onely killed, but also consumed before God: so we must offer our selves after the same manner, that God may annihilate and consume in us, all that is of us; we must arke it of God, not out of self-interest & prosit, but for his glory, out of a desire

defire that his boly will may be fulfilled in us.

3. We must pray Jesus Christ to work in us an effett of his power and love, and not to wait after our infirmites, to estabish in us his Kingdom, his glory, and the power of his grace and fpirit.

4. We must by little and little, with care mortifie our nature, all that is in us, and of us, and with the same care effect a continual! annihilation, of our spirit, of our judgement, and of our own motions, for they are contras

ry to God, and repugnant to our good.

This being granted, we shall see how much we are obliged to alienate & defie our felves, feeing that all that is of us, as being of us, strives to feparate us from God; and therefore this that is of us, must be mightly bumbled, when we fee that the fource of all our evils is in our felves, and that we have a continual inclination to evil. Let us weigh these truths, and endeavour to bear these dispositions, seeing they are necessary to perfection, and to establish us in the Kings dom of Grace; that fo placing our felves under the conduct of God, we may be enabled to live in a perfect conformity to his holy Will;

That we may be the more encouraged in this labour, let us fpeak of the Motives that

oblige us to feek this perfection.

The first Motive.

CHAP. IV.

That by Creation man is obliged to tend to this perfection, and to resign himself to God.

When we say that man is obliged to tend to perfection, we impose not a new Law, but propose the indispensible duty he oweth to his Creator. For as a creature he belongs to God his Creator, he depends on him, and (though he would not, yet) must he subsist onely by him. In this quality he must live not only subject to his government and conduct, but is obliged by the Law of all created beings, according to the intention of his Authour, and the end prescribed him : For as the creature hath no other being, then what he received of his Creator, fo his being hath no other power nor end, then what he, who gave him that being, giveth and prescribes to him. By the fame Principle that he received his being from God, he is obliged to off conformable to the power and end prescribed to him, All creatures employ themfelves according to the capacity of their being,

ing, in that for which God created them; they tend directly (if they go not afide) to the end for which they were created and ordained. Man above all the reft, ought to do the same, to live according to the capacity he hath received of God, inceffantly to tend to the end which the divine wisdome hath proposed to him: For God in the treation of the Universe, seemed to have regard to nothing but man s he stayd not till he had made him, thought onely of perfecting him: he made the world, faith Saint Bafil, as if he applyed not himself unto it; he spake but a word, and the World was made; but man, the mork of his hands, to which he applies his care, he polifheth him with the touches of divine perfection, makes him the Master-piece of his mork, the last draught of his orented perfection, framing him after his own Image, and defigning him for Heaven to rol vino best north what respect soever then we consider men, we shall fee by the condition of his heme, and favour of his Creater, that he is obliged to great perfection, fince the capacity and end of his being regards nothing bit Gbd. He is in a capacity to love him, and is created to poffes him. O man! why dost thou that fee the dignity of thy being, the bappines which thou mayst passes, the eminency of the condition whereto thou art created? Thou God onely

onely of all creatures bearest the effects, the favour and love of thy Creator; thou onely are capable to love him; that which he hath refused all other creatures, he hath in abundance bestowed on thee. After so great a favour darest thou appear without love? Canst thou live without loving him who created thee onely to love him?

When we fay that man by the condition of his being hath a capacity to love God, we mention the highest benefit, the most signall fayour that he hath received of his Creator, for the capacity to love him, giveth him power

to poffefs him.

All creatures, indeed, even the most infenfible, feel the Mujesty and Power of their Greator; they are left to the conduct and gopermnent of their God, but not one hath power to leve him, but man, who was created only for this end, being made capable to love his Greator. Therewith God hath not only given him this capacity, and the advantage of so noble and divine a quality, but wills alfo that all that he hath created, should further him in this love, and ferve as motives to reach him to love. Is not man then obliged to love, so good, so kind, so liberall a Creator; and if he be obliged to love him, is he not as much obliged to perfection, seeing this perfection confifts in love, which gives us God.

God

27

God in creating man, ufeth another mesnes to oblige him to him, and to feek perfection in that, befides making him capable to love his Creator, he hath affigned as the end and perfection of his being the possession of his Creator. This refentment the Father of nature giveth us. Faith teaches us that the end of man is fupernatural, that this end is no other then God, whom man must posses, Thus by Creation, man is not onely in a capacity to love God, (a most singular favour) but hath also for his end the possession of God himself. Whence we must conclude, that as everything feeketh its perfection, and by a natural and necessary instinct, runs to its last end to enjoy it and repose there; so man being created to pesses God, his ultimate end carries an inftinct that drawes him to God, and by the same Law whereby he is naturally obliged to feek perfection, he is obliged to leve and feek God in love and pofferfion, in whom confifts his perfection. This instinct is naturall and proper to him, as it is naturall to a stone to tend downward, and to fire to mount upward; whereby it is evident, that we must promise our selves not onely in Heaven the fulfilling of this Law, but me must begin it upon earth, and from the first use of our reason, observe this precept. Indeed this capacity of Love is fulfilled and perleve

Sal. 6,7.

personal Heaven, onely in the state of glory, but we must begin to love here. We must resign to God who is our end, if in the end we will possess him, for what sever a Mon soweth, that shall be also reap said the Aposte. To this God invited us by the benefit of Greation, to this he obliges us by an eternal Lam, a Law which he hath engraved in the Center of our being, a Law which can by no meanes be defaced during our life, a Law indispenceable. For man was onely created to love God, and hath no capacity more natural then that of Love, his onely business both in Easth and Heaven, is to love God and possess him, wherein consistent persons.

Considering these truths, it is impossible to conceive to what blindness the corruption of times have reduced the spirits of men, who being born for Heaven onely, spend all their thoughts on Earth, and separating themselves from their God, are so strongly fecter d to the Greature, that they know not what perfettion is believing they have power to dispance with so holy a Law. But can this Law of Love be blotted out of our bearts? Can we despise it, notwithstanding the many surfour that oblige us to it? Is there any thing more reasonable then to love them that love us? what greater love could God testifie to us, then to make us capable to

love

wetilm, and welcome us to posses him? everrauche obliges us hereto, this benefit is an act of Lave. Goddoving us to be beloved realing we can do no telle in acknowledgement of this benefit of week, but perfectly love han; we can never deny we are obliged to this acknowledgement, if we would not be convinted of ingratitude, nor can we acknowl ledge it but by having him. God who is all fulness and self-sufficiency, ean receive nothing of us but low, and therefore by the fame Law, whereby we are obliged to acknowledge him our Creator, we are obliged to her, and confequently to be perfect, fince perfection cannot be without love so

God himfelf hath engraved this defign, imprinted this Land of Love in the Center of our fouls, and bottom of our bearys. Therefore as Thomas of Aquin observes, the form of our heart beares the image of this Love, it is large at the tops and pointed at the bontom, open to Heaving that to Earth, to thew us that we live onely for Heaven, that our heart the fear of Love, is open onely core ceive and bear the influences of Headen, and not capable to have any befides him! who vergner in the Pleavens : and the form of our body ftraight and tall, tells us, that Heaven onely is the object of our fight, the judged of

The feel by its most fensible inclinations, is carried on to this leve. By the fame ne ceffity that the part loves the whole, the forme his Father, man is obliged to love his God, by Creation his Father, his all; and were it not that the foul ruines these motions by strange love whereto the tyes her felf, the would feel her felf so powerfully attracted thereby, that the would not be able to restrain the violence, or to ftop the courfe thereof. This is fo true, that do she what she can, though she do suffer her self to be transported with the love of Creatures, to the prejudice of the love of God, yet can she not root out these resentments of God, so deep this Law of acknowledging her God is engraved in her being. For when she hath loved all but God, the fees that the hath loved nothing, she knowes that there is neither firm content, affured repose, nor true perfection, but in the love of her Creator, Now though we would difingage our felves from this Obligation, yet is it impossible, for God who wills that we love him, maketh use of all things, wea even of our self-love to attract us to his love. In loving our selves, we love naturally what is good, our own good. Now God is not onely the true Soveraign good, but by creation he would be the onely good of our fouls, that we might love him in this quality, for what is more to man then God? The Lord Lord is my heritage and my portion, faith David. Pfal. 142.5
If naturally every thing toves his particular good, why should not a man be obliged to love his God, who is his true, his onely good; and if he be obliged to love him, he is by confequence obliged to passes him, and in possessing him, to be perfect, which is the scope of this first Motive.

The fecond Motive.

he is unworthy to prefent bundelf before his Greater, to appear Viga Hand Throw of his

his merevalous not infin

That Man, in as much as he is a Sinner, and the child of Adam, is obliged to feek God as the only remedy to his evils.

World understood aright, is but a Prison, where we are detained, during the excution of the Sentence pronounced against the children of Adam the Offender, we being such, have forfeited our right, we are deprived, and made unworthy of all forts of grates, forfeited our priviledges; for as children of Adam, as suners, as culpable before God, we have no more any right our selves, to our life, to our aftions

allient, to the world, or to any creature; but having loft all by Sin, we are left wholly to the Justice of God, who by reason of our offence, hath reason to dispoyl us of all the pifes of grace and nature, and to do with us as pleases him, according to the riger of his equitable Justice. Moreover, as children of Adam, we are so miserable, that we may truly fay, there is nothing more unworthy, more unprofitable, more uncapable then man; his unworthiness is so great, that he cannot think one thought of God, be it never so little, if God of his mercy doth not infuse it into him s he is unworthy to present himself before his Creator, to appear before the Throne of his foveraign Majesty even to demand grace and pardon for his fins. This amount hinefs arrived to fuch a point, that it was necessary the Son of God should be made man; that God immertall should be clothed with our morte lity, to purchase for us by his blood and leath, a power to feroe him; to merit for us by his life and fufferings, the graces necessary for us, to produce good thoughts to obtain for us permission to present our felves to God, and beforehim, to re-inflate us with a hope of perdon and trust in his Grace not the to vigrouns

Man as a Sinner, is so unprofitable and uncapable; that without Gods particular grace, without an effect of his divine merty he can do no good work, nor hope for any bleffing or favour; and if he receive any, if he find himself replenished with love and hope, or capable of any good, it is onely by the bounty of God, who, though justly provoked, stayes the effects of his Justice, that we might tast the fruits of his inexhaustible goodness. Confidering these motives and truths, let us stand here before God, as guilty of divine Magifatis lasa: Let us look upon our selves as funers, and we shall clearly fee, that by this estate we are left to Gods Justice, that we must of necessity leave our selves to his condust and divine will. For if for civil crimes men worthy of death are left to the Lawes of Justice, and the will of their Prince, who will dispose of their life and goods as pleases hims certainly man, as a finner worthy of death, ought to be left to the will of his God to do with him according to the rigour of his Jufice, or effects of his mercy. ...

This is the first practice to be learned from this Motive, for the foul in the confidence tion of these truths, ought to do that in love, humility, and chayce, which she cannot avoid upon constraint. A Christian, as the child of Adam, and so a sinner, must put himself before God, resign himself wholly to him, and with an humble submission and contentment of shrit, receive from his most wise hand, all

the effects of his divine conduct, and accept, with a refignation, good and evill, privation and enjoyment, all that may happen unto him. Above all, he must be careful to continue in a profound bumility before God, exposing himself to the raies of his divine mercy, to move him to pardon. From this Principle, we draw a fecond practife, feeing the need we have of God. For confidering our felves to be so wretched and miserable, we are obliged to feek a remedy for our evills. Now as this cannot be found but in God, the repairer of our faults, the freer of our fouls, it will follow, that by the knowledge of our mileries, and the weight of the iniquities which oppress us, we are driven to have recourse un-to God, even by the same exigence whereunto finne hath reduced us, and are obliged to feek outGod. Every way that man confiders himself, he finds himself in a want of God, and confequently obliged to feek God, as the onely bappiness of his foul, the onely remedy of his evils.

The better to under fund this, we must remember, that by sinne, man is equally miserable in two considerations, the rigour and violence of sinne which oppress him, and the evills and disorders whereinto sinne precipitates hims from which two states, he cannot get but by possessing of God. For the first, such teaches

25

us, that man cannot get out of sin, do whatsoever he can, if God himself come not to
relieve and deliver him. Man, of himself,
may lose himself, may plunge himself, may
sell himself, may enslave himself, but he cannot free himself, nor bestow himself, but by
the mercy of God, who gave us his Son, to
re-establish all things in us, as the Apostle afsirms. Now, this re-establishment is done onby by the spirit of love and sharity, which is
the spirit of God in us, given to us. From
whence we see, that he that will avoid his
miseries, and shake off the yoke of sin, must
necessarily possess God, who onely can free
him.

Hence we may observe, what a work the conversion of a foul to God is, and the freeing of a finner, by what way foever it is wrought in man. To apprehend properly the importance of this work of grace, we must fay, that he that would be converted, and delivered from fin, must not onely go out of his fin, but must also possess God, and consequently by the same Motive that he defires to go out of his fin, he is obliged to diffest himself to puffel's God, and to become worthy of so hely an heritage; for to confess his fin, to turn to God to be delivered from his fin and to peffefr God is all one thing; wherein appears the need we have to feek God, and how reboles feriously

feriously a Christian ought to labour in an af-

The ferend state of our miferies, doth no leffe oblige us to feek God then the former. for by the effect of fine, and the Tyramy lit exercises over us, we are continually toffed about, difarder d, made vapationde, and procipitated from imperfection to imperfaction, from fin to fin. from trouble to trouble. This evil hath no remedy, what refolution foever the foul takes, what diligence soever it weth, what habit foever it assumed, it will never find calme, reft, or deliverance, till it hath found and possesses God, and be possessed of him Never shall she be in true liberty, Christian liberty, the liberty of the children of God, until the possesses the spirit of God, wherein they deceive themselves, who to orguire the peace of the foul, and true liberty of the spirit, use a thousand practifes, and a multitude of evercifer; peace and true Christian liberty; being not to be found but in the poffession of God. Many things indeed that we freak and do; ferve to deffen our trouble and throlden but not one can give true liberty, or the peace of the spirit, but the passession of God The reason is demenstrative; mothing can have peace, liberty, and repose, but in its proper Centre. God is the Centre of the faul, there ford in God alone is her peace, liberty, and repose,

repose, and as long as she is with God, and possesses him, she is in liberty and repose no longer. Whence we evidently conclude, that while the foul is separated from God, she is tyrannized over by the malice of sin, continually drawn into circumstances, terms, and subversions. And fouls that make shew to fearch after the truth, and to live in the purity of Christianity, if they feek not God purely, and ferioufly; if he dwelleth not in the bottom of their hearts, shall never live but in difquiet, and in trouble, in scruples, and in Pannick ters rours : For it's an infallible maxime, That man can never rest but in the possession of God, the contre of his foul.

In this we fee the ftrict Obligation that we have to feek God, and to study Christian perfection, which confifts in the possession of God. This is the refentment, the defire, and demand of the Spoule, when the runs after her God, erying to him, Tell me (O thou whom my foul Cant. t. 7. loveth) where thou feedest; where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon, for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? This holy Lover knows, that as long as she is feparated from her God, she shall be subjected to error, and to the tyrannicall usurpation of sin: she knows by experience, that he that is not with God in the pessession of his firit, shall alway be overwhelmed with all

forts

Part II.

forts of misfortunes, led captive, and dragged by his own lufts, deceived and betrayed by the foolish love of the creatures, and therefore the feeks her God, with fo much order and affection. They that will withdraw themselves from these evils, and affure repose to their consciences, peace to their spirits, and quiet to their passions, must do the like; they must feek God purely, sincerely, and with perseverance; they must endeavour to possess him, that they may find in him a perfect liberty and affured peace. Saint Auftin fays all this in two words; O Lord, our heart is always unsettled and uquiet, untill the time it shall repose in thee. Then again, addressing his speech to men; Wherefore, faith he, O men of nothing, do you wander in the fearch of many things? Wherefore doth your covetousness make you unconstant, vagabonds in your thoughts and desires; seek, seek him who is all things, in him you shall have all, there you shall find rest and remedy for, your miseries.

This care we must have; which cannot be sufficiently recommended to you; therefore, as it is of consequence, we must proceed

in discourse of it.

Devil, confiningue to his

or the Keyboure faith, we are

CHAP VI.

of the flate of Man after the Sin of Adam, and of the need he hath of his God, on ob

LI the duties of the foul are comprised in these words of David, Eschew evil, and do good; words that contain all Laws, divine and humane; for they onely forbid evil, and command good; words fo absolute and generally true, that he who keeps this Commandment, shall certainly be perfect. It is not needfull to explicate this Propolition, it is a naturall Precept, a Law God hath graven in the bottom of Reason, that none might be ignorant of it, that all might be without excuse before the Tribunall of God. Notwithstanding, (O unhappiness of humane nature!) fince the fin of Adam, we are become fo unworthy, fo criminall, that we cannot, without the favour of God, either eschero evil, or do good, fo evident is it, that man hath need of God.

As children of Adam, we are children of maledition, begotten in a generall condemnation, conceived in fin, born children of wrath. Adam indeed gave us nature and life, but subject to the power and mulice of sin, which **fabjects**

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Gen. 6.5.

fubjects us to the Devil, confining us to his will and conduct. From the womb we bear the yoke of sin, as the Scripture saith, we are in the Kingdom of death, so far impotent and evil, that without the grace of God we can do nothing but works of death and captivity, wherein we see the need we have of God to avoid this mifery. For if from our birth we are subjected to the tyranny of fin, doubtless we should be drawn to all forts of vice; there is no fin which man would not commit, if Goddid not withold him; Every imagination of the thought of his heart is onely evil continually (sayes God of man) so evil, that he would lose, and incessantly precipitate himself in defires of fins and abominations, if God by his power did not with-hold him; fo true is it that we cannot fly evil without Gods help, we are so much flaves to it, that only God can free and dram us out of this captivity.

This it is Saint Austin means in his Confessions, when he thanks God, not onely for delivering him from the sins he committed, but also for restraining him from all others. I ascribe it unto thy grace, saith he, that thou hast dissolved my sins, as the Sun doth Ice. I refer to thy mercy, all the sins which I have not committed. I confess that all hath been forgiven me, as well that which I did of my own will, as that which I did not commit,

being

being prevented and aided by thy grace. Where he teacheth us, that without the grace of God we cannot thun evill; thus is manifest the need we have of God. If the Lord of Sabboth (faith St. Paul out of the Prophet) Rom 9.29 had left us a feed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrab.

This is not hard to conceive, if, by the way we confider, that man, as the Sonne of Adam, is degraded from the justice and holiness of God, deprived of grace, despoyl'd of all his gifts, cruelly wounded in his nacure, is separated from God, hath wholly converted himself to the Creature, and being reduced to, and plunged in this deplorable condition, is so impotent, that he cannot raise himself according to his end and perfection up to God, unless affisted by the grace of 7efis Christ, who onely can draw us out of the abysse of sinne, reinvest us in holiness and mercy, as with new gifts merited by his death and sufferings, he alone can lead us to God; and as without him, we separate our selves continually from God, fo with his affiftance we approach unto him, and by his grace, we who were children of curfing, are made children of God and of bleffing. Wherein, on one fide appeareth the miserable estate whereunto we are reduced as children of Adam; on the other, the great need we have of God and H 3

his affifunce. Now in confidering these truths, if we have any sense of salvation, will we not immediately say that we are obliged to seek God, to implore the power of his spirit, and strongly to renounce the power of sinne, the spirit of Adam, and to resign our selves wholly to the grace and conduct of God, protesting and acknowledging before the throne of his mercies, the need we have of him, to eschew evill, which is man's first

duty?

If we examine the need we have of God, to do good and practife vertue, we shall find our felves in the like indigence. Faith teaches us, that we cannot do any work of falvation, if we be not joyned to God by grace, and, as Jefus Christ faith, as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no mere can ye, except ye abide in me. We can do nothing of our felves, as our felves, because finne hath brought us into fuch a condition, that being dispoiled of the gifts of God, and made unworthy of his grace, we are reduced to fuch impotence, that we can neither ferve nor love God, nor do any good work, if we have not of him grace, strength, and merit to do it. He alone gives us the thought of good, nor is that fufficient, he must give us also the will and resolution to accomplish it, which when we have also received, if God himfelf

Jo. 15.

himself give us not the accomplishment of it, it is nothing. For notwithstanding all the good will and refolutions in the World, we shall never put them in practife without grace, and after all this perseverance in good, is necessary, for he onely shall be crowned who continues to the end. Yet we cannot have, nor merit it, it is the gift onely of the mercy of God, a pure effect of his bounty. Herein appears the extream need that we have of God, how necesfary this grace is to us, not onely to do well, but also to persevere. From these truths we learn that a Christian that will be faved, must not onely have a good will, or entertain a good intention, but further he must feriously feek God, adbere to him, and possess him, fince in him alone confifteth the grace that is neceffary, to do well, and to end well, in a holy perseverance.

Salvation is not a thing so easie as we conceive, for we have nothing at all in our selves as our selves, that can help to save us. On the contrary, all that is in us, is in opposition to grace, and by sinne conspires our ruine. He that will save himself, must seek from without himself the way of his salvation, the power to do works worthy of Paradise, the power to serve God, which he cannot find but in Jesus Christ, there he must seek it, of him alone he must have the power to serve

H 4

God,

God, the merit of his good works, the grace of perseverance, and the conduct of his life: confequently, he must possess and adhere to him, if he will attain his happiness, nothing else is of advantage, seeing Jesus Christ saith him-

felf, Without me ye can do nothing.

Rules and Constitutions may be given us; Dies and Documents may be prescribed to practife Vertue, and to attain to Christian perfection, but all will be without profit and stability, if we go not out of our selves to possess Jesus his spirit and grace, to receive in him and of him, true Vertue, stability and perseverance. For the grace of Jesus is wholly to have true Vertue and Christianity, and perfectly to accomplish the actions and practifes that are proposed to us.

If we examine these principles of truth, we shall immediately find from whence arriveth an evill commonly observable in the Church of God, that many souls live in a good observance, labour much, and exercise themselves in the practise of the number of the Vertues, yet make little or no progress towards the perfection that they defire, and never arrive at the end which they propose to themselves. If a reason may be given for a missortune so generall, it appeareth, that this cannot proceed from any thing, but that such souls seek not God purely, nor resign them-

themselves to his conduct, to follow with simplicity and fidelity, the order which God hath established on them, but with a respect to themselves desirous to rife and arrive to an effate whereunto God doth not call them; or they refuse to labour with fidelity, to attain that whereunto God calls them. They repard not God, they work not by grace, not. feek it where it is, but trust in their own frength, and work not with fubmiffion to grace it felf. They feek not in Jefus Christ strength and power to work, for they think not of it, being fo blind that they rely upon themselves, and by secret esteem of their own actions and Labours, eafily perswade themselves, that there is Vertue, where none is, and that they are in some estate of perfection, when they are very far from it, confiding in their own good will, or in a fimple intention, which they think good. Believing this enough for them, they neglect or despife all the rest, which is of greater importance.

Now, to remedy this evil, which is not to be negletted, you must practife what I

shall tell you.

desire of God, in a resolution not to love or att, but by grace, and by the spirit of Jesus; this desire is a disposition little known, yet more

more important then it seems; for God will be defired, and takes pleasure to fee a foul thirst and run after him: We see that he deferred his great mercies, and gave not his Conne to the world, till 4000 years after man had defired him.

2. We must demand his spirit with earneftness, crying from the bottom of our hearts, after Jefus the onely freer of our fauls,

the true principle of grace.

3. All our recourse must be to Jesus; not relying, or confiding in any thing but his power, vertue and grace, to love and act by his dispositions. This is properly that we call acting by the spirit, and by submission to

grace. Let us proceed to the confideration of truth to give our selves light, and to let those that would be faved, know the need they have of God, and the rule they ought to obferve in their actions, to render themselves morthy of God. Faith teacheth us, that every

Jam. 1, 17. good guift, and every perfect guift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights; that the eternal Father giveth us all by his Some and in his Sonne, and confequently the Sonne of God is made all things to us, in bim we have all, out of him we have nothing, whence he is called the gift of God; And St. Paul speak-Tob 4, 10.

ing of the eternall Father, who gives us his Sonne, Sonne, saith, that he is made all things unto us;
by him we are in Jesus Christ, who becomes a Cor. 1.
unto us by God, Wisdom, and Ryphteousness, 30.
and Santissication, and Redemption. These
words represent unto us two truths. First,
That we are in Jesus; which shews us the adberence we ought to have to Jesus Christ. The
other that we have all in him, as having the
Sonne of God, in whom is true love, true miss.

dom, and affured falvation. To say says

By those truths we learn that Jesus Christ being the true gift of God, we have nothing if we poses not him. We must therefore labour to become fit to posess him with the effects that he will operate in us. Herein confifts the practife of Christian life, to receive Tefus as a gift of God, to posses him as a great treasure, to offer him to God, to refer him to his Father, and with him out Being, our life and actions. Our foul must be continually employ d in this double practife, in these two continuall motions towards God, one to receive Jesus Christ who is the grace of graces, the other to offer him to his Father, he being the gift of gifts, and with him to refer our selves intirely to the glory of his Father, and accomplishment of his boly mill;

three This gunder and motive

The third Motive.

CHAP. VII.

That a Christian is a Member of Jesus Christ, and as such he must be ruled by the Spirit, and live the life of Jesus Christ.

The most noble Quality man can have on earth, the most happy condition whereto he may be advanced, is that of a Christian. By this state, God alwayes good and full of mercy, relieves him in his faults, repairs his losses, calls and associates him to his divine greatness. By the grace of Christianity he is the child of God, and member of Jesus Christ, and capable of the life of his own Son, and by consequence he will fill him with the spirit and perfections of God.

Thus the Apostle speaking of the Eternall Father, saith, that he bath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, assuring us, that by this spirit, we are sons of God; and he fre-

Christ. This quality and motive is the foundation of the state and spirit of Christianity, that shows what a Christian ought to be, and

how

how eminent and accomplished the perfection is whereto he must arrive.

Saint Paul tells us, we are members of Col. 1. 18. Tesus Christ; the Church is a body, the mysticall body of the Son of God, whereof Jefus is the bead, and Christians the members; Ye Eph.4.25. are the body of Jesus Christ, and members of 15. his members, faith the Apostle; Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? This Text is cleer, which if we confider intentively, it will furnish us with rich thoughts, and lift us up to the knowledge of the dignity of a Christian. I leave it to the piety of the reader to infift upon this subject. If according to the Doctrine of the Apostle, we are members of Jesus Christ, it must follow, that we wholly belong to Jefus Christ, and are to him in truth and by grace, that which by nature the members are to their head. By the head the members are enlivened; the head hath the care and guidance of them all: fo in Jesus, and by Jesus, we are enlivened, guided, and advanced, of his fulness have we all received, faith Joh. 1. 16. Saint John; he is our life, the foul of our fouls, faith Saint Austin, and much more, then the foul is the life of our body. Now, if the head and foul enliven, guide, animate, and make the body to subsist, if the body have a continual dependance on the conduct and motions of the foul, is it not also agreeable that a Christian be animated

animated with the spine of the son of God which he possesseth, and whereof he is wholly possessed, that he be wholly left to the care and conduct, and motions of Jesus Christ, of whom he is a member?

These are the two Estates wherein a perfeet Christian must be; he must possess God, and be resigned to the conduct of the spirit of God. We have already shewed how much he is obliged to feek God, and to possefs him, if he will arrive to the perfection to which he is called. It remains that we know how he must resigne himself wholly to God. As members of the Son of God, we are necessarily and essentially (if I may so speak) lest to the leve, care; and conduct of the beavenly Father, which love is the fame love which he hath for his Son, the same conduct that he hath over him. For we are part of his Son, being his members, and, as the Apostle faith, his fulnes. The Church, faith he is the body of Jesus, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all, wherein we see the happy estate of a Christian, who by the grace of Christianity, being made a member of Jesus Christ in pursuit of his state is lest to the same care, the same conduct, the same love that the eternall Father hath for his Son. Being then arrived to this happines, what remains, but to live with great vigilancy, to put our felves, to leave our felves.

felves, and to maintain our selves in this love of the eternall Father, to abandon our selves, soul and body, to divine conduct, to remain in this union and unity with his Son (for he looks on us in his Son, as members and part of his Son) and also being united to Jesus, to submit our selves to the disposall of his spirit, and to the motions of his grace, as the members are to the head.

It was the request of Jesus to his Father the last day of his life, the eve before his death; for this he made that prayer full of love, repeated at large by Saint John, wherein he begs of his Father, that he would have the same love for us that he had for him from eternity, and that he would be by grace to us, what he is to him by nature, that the fame unity of love that binds them together, may be in us, that we may not live but in this love, in this mion and unity, that we may live in him by his spirit and love, as he lives in the unity of the spirit and love of his Father. Words of love, and of truth, words of efficacy, words which cleerly shew the defigns Jefus hath over us, what he hath merited for us, and what ought to be the life of a Christian and in whom confideth the spirit of Christianity.

If we proceed a little further in the confideration of the lights of Faith, we shall find a

new light which distovers this truth. The Oeconomy and the works of God in the Mysterie of the Incarnation, teach us that the whole condust of the Church, all the regency of the world, and by consequence the government of all fouls in generall, and every one in particular is left to fefus, who is the way, the truth, and the life of our fouls. He is, faith the Apostle, our Fulness; he is our All, and that which raises the conduct of Christ, and renders it admirable, is, that it is accompanied with wildom, power, and infinite love : For he employs his power wholly to furnish us, to affift us in all things; his wisdom leads us to God, and establishes us in the state and perfection God requires of us; and he employs his love to enrich us with his treasures, to enlighten us with his spirit, to guide by his light, and to communicate to us, by the excess of his bounty, his being, his life, and his greatuefs. Thus the quality whereto we are advanced by Christianity, being made members of Jesus, renders us worthy of the care and conduct of the eternall Father, and binding us to Jefus, makes us by grace one with him, partakers of his greatness.

This expresses the perfection whereto God hath called us; These truths considered, will cause us highly to esteem the grace and state of Christianity. These motives are

to powerful, that they feem not only to invite, butto confirmin us by amorous allurements to elign our selves wholly to God. Let us adde a common Doctrine of Saint Bernard, as the last draught of this admirable conduct. The conduct, faith he, of Jefus in us, is admirable, in that be bath as much care of one fingle foul, as well as of all; his wisdom is employed for one foul as well as for all; and he loves one foul with the fame infinite love wherewith he loves all; yea, he loves his elect and Christians, with the fame love wherewith he loveth himself. Here let us stop, for more cannot be faid; Let us adore this love which operates with great things in the fouls of the Elect. Let us love him who loves us fo much; and let us live the life of him who lives in us. If we reflect upon these eruths, justly may we be aftonished at the obstinacy and blindness of those who make so many difficulties to refign themselves wholly both body and foul to the conduct of God, and absolutely to abandon themselves to the providence love and wifdom of Jefus. What? can any man yet doubt of the bounty and love of God? diftrust his wifdem after so manifest a truth? Is it possible a Christian can imagin that he is to take care of the creature, that humane prodence is necessary where God vouchfafes by his bouncy to apply and employ his care, wisdom, and infinite goodnes?? CHAP.

But only to apply himself to the way of God, that is to say, with an application worthy of God, perfect as God is perfect: good, as God is good, accommodating himself, not withstanding to the commodity and feebleness of the creature.

If we adhere to these truthe, it is fit, that as members of the Son of God, we live fubject to his will, abandon our selves to his loving conduct, endeavouring nothing fo much as to please and satisfie him. This God requires of us; to this all Christians are obliged; and therefore, to profit by this third Motion, let us go out of our felves, let us quit the care of our felves, a care that nourifles nothing but complacency and felffatisfaction, which altogether confides in the difordinate love of our felves : Let us refigue our selves wholly to his sare and providence of him, who uncessantly fixeth the eye of his infinite bounty upon us; Let us trust in him who hath a heart all of love, who onely thinks of us, and be all to him, and for him; Let us endeavour to have no forisfaction nor complacency but in him, seeing he alone according to the Prophet, Loves us from eiermiry calls and draws us lovingly to come to him, and to be his. If you now require some forms for this Resignation, I will propose them,

Jen 31.13.

ploy his care, merely and

Tistora.

CHAP. VIII.

Proclifes to help a Christian to leve in Subjection

The Christian who would profit by the Motive we last proposed, must weight the quality he hath in being a member of Jesus Christ; for Jesus being his head, will unite himself to him, appropriate himself to him, possess him, encline him, insuse into him his own being and life, guide him on the earth, as well as redeem him on the Cross; and by a particular bounty, love him with the same love that he loves himself, and as the head loveth his members.

t. To make use of these thoughts, the Christian seeing himself so chosen, united, and amorously drawn to Jesus Christ, must make a particular profession and protestation to adhere to Jesus, to renounce all humane prudence, all care and conduct of himself, leave himself wholly in all things, to the power, providence and conduct of Jesus. Farther, he must yelld up all the right that God his Creation hath given him to his liberty to his life, to his actions, and to all inserious christ upon putting winto the hands of Jesus christ upon

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whom

whom he must depend in all things, protesting that he will use them no farther then as dependant on the conduct, intentions and will of

Jefus.

2. The true Christian must make a strong resolution to rely onely on God, all other things being indifferent unto him, whence he will endeavour to follow and accept with tranquillity of spirit, all that God ordains, and to establish himself wholly in this confidence of God, in this conformity and relyance on the conduct of Jesus. He will study to bear in his heart and foul, a contempt of all natural prudence, in making little account even of things that depend on his grace, faying to himfelf, that he will onely rely on Jesus who is his All, and that whatever happen, supernaturall grace, which is the light of Heaven, will never fail to give him as much knowledge and experience in all things, as shall be necessary for him, but far more profitably, and more perfeetly then humane prudence can do.

3. As this manner of doing may have great and continuall oppositions, so the Christian, who desires to please God, must endeavour to live with vigilancy over himself, and particularly have a great care to mortise the assaults of Nature, the motions of the humane spirit, and the applications and agitations of the wisdom of the flesh, all which opposite the second of the wisdom of the flesh, all which opposite the second of the wisdom of the flesh, all which opposite the second of the wisdom of the flesh, all which opposite the second of the wisdom of the flesh, all which opposite the second of the

pefeth the spirit of God. And because nature useth to infinuate amidst grave, and, disquissing her self, dissemble to be what she is not, (we not knowing it, and even contrary to our own intentions) to prevent this deceit, and to assure our selves in a matter so dangerous, yet hard to be discovered, it is necessary that the Christian with a great bumility, and a desire full of ession, renounce all the motions and essets of nature, and give himself with all his heart to the spirit and grave of sesuit gilancy upon the bottom and the dispositions of his soul, that with a great sidelity he may live in the subjection he ought to the grave and conduct of sesuic nature.

important it is: we must consider that the effect of the grace of Christianity, may be reduced to one point: The designer of God upon our souls are reduced to one thing one. ly, which it is their aim to effect in us. This point which God will do in us, is to establish his sanctification, glory and Kingdom in our souls. This is the end of his design, whereto all the effects of his grace and divine operations tend. Whence we may infer, that if God requires nothing of us, nor hath no other design on us, but to establish in our souls his empire and the Kingdom of his spirit and grace,

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we also must have no other core, defire, or application, then to Subject our selves to the Kinydom of God, to live in the obedience and conduct of his first and years. And as all the deligns of God uniterhemfelves in this one point, so the Christian must labour in this point, that he may be, in all, even to the least of his thoughts, and willions, and fmallest merions of his foul, subjected to the Kingdom of God! Hereby I mean that all the motions, thoughts and octions of a Christian must be ruled and subjected to the love, power, will, and donduct of God, that with peace and inward content, he must receive the effects of God, and walk with fidelity in the wayes God requires, that God may raign perfectly in him by his love and grace; and that he may raign here in all those wayes and manners; (that is, as gloriously) as he raigns with the Saints in Heaven, proportienably norwithstanding to our present

I know not whether a true foul that hath true faith, can make this point hard to it felf. I cannot believe that a Christian will oppose this Truth, and lesse imagine that a full it cannot arrive to the pose fion of a folid and Christian vertue, if she walk not by the may, and light of the truths proposed, if she do not found her felf upon this spirit. For

if we confider and believe that we are members of Jefus Christ, brue, not imaginary members, not of a man, or Saint, but of Jefus Son of the homy God; and that in this guality we are truly and immediately amen to him; if I lay we confider our felves as fuch, do we not at the fame time fee, that we are mited to God, and that by fuch an wind we must be unimated by this spirit, live by his life, and be governed by his condust? This is the first condition whereunto we are raised by Christianity, the first grave we receive in Baptifme. What vertue and perfection can that foul have, which lives not conformable to this effuse? what doth that foul learn which knowes nor his truth? To what end is the rest of our practife and this great fabrick of devotion which we propose to our selves, if we lay that this first foundation which is so necessary; that without it all the rest cannot subjist ? If we have God for us; if we are mited to him, as members to the head; yet if we are not refigned as we ought to his infinite wisdom and loving conduct, why do we trouble our felves with all the rest? To what end so much care, so much prudence, and humane providence? To what end so many defires? He is too covedefire, to whom its God and Creator is made

made all things? And if it cannot find reft in this where can it find reft ? What can comtent bien, robo is not content with God, faith Sto Profes - Certainly that foul is very blind and milerable, which is not content with providence and the love of Jefus. I domand all that you would have of humane prudence in all things, (we shall find but two many reasons. to invite us) but a fool brought up in the knowledge of the truths of Christianity, and nourith'd in the esteem of God, will say with a holy person of our time, that the poor, Dones are more pleasing to God then the Serpentaniones son early his said

Let us then raise our selves up to God, trust in him, adhere to his spirit, and beg light of him to penetrate into these truths, to bear the effects of them, and grace to live faithfully in his wayes. There remains one motive more, to fee the obligations we have to belong to God, and to adhere to him, if

the miles were also with the tree of the tree had he tone design of the side of the state of the same looked contact. They do not contact the small combined based of the meditarion formich beet en and bronne modellered To whoisend to road who here is the site of some

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we will arrive at perfection.

The fourth Motive

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them, and makes the miles had in the charge

That this Precept, to love God, doth oblige us to perfection, and makes us to go out of our felves to be God's.

would remain very daubtfull, we much inten-Ontinuing the designes we have undertaken in this fecond Part, to fhew by divers Motives the Obligations all men have to be perfect, and to adhere to God, and live in Subjection and Submission to his conduct and grace solt remains that we confider in this last Mative, the effentiall and indispensable Obligations, that we all have to the Precept of Lave, and confequently to perfection; to which end we must consider the two estates in the Church of God; the effects of the ordinary Christian, and that of the more Religious, not to examine them, but to behold the abuse of the former, too lightly believing that perfection and folid vertue is not for them, and losing themselves in this Errour, perswade themselves that a Christian, as Christian is not at all obliged to interiour life and vertue, but that it is a work of supererogation, and an unnecessary labour to be bufied

fied in acquisition of Christian vertue, and possession of inward perfection; a manifest Errour, the hold damageable in that it derogates from the honour of God, gives license to the world; and blinding their souls, looses them, and makes them slothfull in the search of the right way to salvation. To undeceive our selves then in a matter so important, and to secure our salvation, which otherwise would remain very doubtfull, we must intentively observe the observations of these two estates, that by this knowledge we may know what we ought to be.

Saint Thomas Aquenus teacheth us, that the foul that profesieth Religion, enters into a stable and permanent estate wherein the feeks after true and folid perfection, develting her felf of all that may hinder her arrivall to this perfeccion. By this follown profession, the renouncer all things, taking in this manner of life, as faith Mofer the Abboe, the wayer, in-Arements and means to attain certainly to this perfection, fo much commended and recommended by Jefus Christ For this Reafon file makes vowes to separate her felf from her felf, and all other creatures, to appropriate her felf to Gods and if the take heed to all the circumstances which accompany this action, or, if lifting up her eyer to Heaven, the confiders the will of God cowards her in her vo-

cation,

cation, the knows that by the estate of Reliden, the enters into a profession which must ever her from the world, and whatfocver is the world, to mite her to her God, and to slace her, if we may so say, in the besom of God, to live upon earth, the life that the Am gels live in howen, to lead, in a holy communic on, the life that God leads in his bolines, that is to fay, the life of God in God For as God is bufied wholly in the knowledge and love of himself, so the soul which defireth to per-Cottonate her felf, is not bufied in Religion, but in a pure and commall contemplation of God, and in aces of love, which the doth with great cure and vigilancy's For, for the foul to be as God would have her, and arrive to the emment and divine estate whereto Godhath called her, must be accidentally, and by grace that which God is subflantially, and by nature. This is much in few words to extell the Religious estate, and makes us see how holy it is whereto they are called. But we are to understand, that what is faid, extends to all Christians; for the estate of Christianity is an offate stable and permonent, which dalls and leads us to the participation of a dis vine life, an estate permanent and indiffensobles for it is marked with the character of Bap. tifine, which according to the Principles of our Fairb, can never be defaced; an eftace

boly and of a particular fantisy, which only appertains to Christianity, fince it is confectated by the undian of the most hely Trinity sonfirmed by the grace of adoption, and enriched with the falness of the boly Ghost, who is given us by confirmation, and conferved by the facraments; an estate permanent, seeing it is indiffensable, for no Christian can go out of, or have a diffensation from the obligation he hath to his perfection, a perfection not indifferent, but Evangelicall and Christian, which the Son of God mentions in the Gofpel with fuch high and divine words, words not of counsel, as many think, but of command, in cleer and express terms, teftifying his will; words addressed not onely to the Religious, but to all Christians: Be ye perfect, saith he, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfeet. What can be faid more? or spoke in more express terms? How would we have more cleerly expressed what this perfection ought to be, then to fay, you must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect?

This perfection confifts in the union of the foul with God, and this union is made and accomplified by pure and perfect love; the love of God, coming from God above, which alone hath power to give God to us, and to unite us to God. All Christians in generall, are called to the union which is made on earth by grace, Whence

and in heaven by glory.

Matth. 5.

Whence I first infer, that as all christians are called to this union of the faul with God, fo are all obliged to that love which makes this union, that is to fay, to a leve, pure, buly and worthy of God, a love express'd and lively, represented by the mouth of God in thefe words, Thou Shalt love the Lord thy Mat, 22. God with all thy heart: his words fo express it, 37. that they speak all the perfection of love; so

generall, that they oblige all to this love.

I infer fecondly, that the perfection whereunto the Religious are called, is not different from that whereto all christians are obliged, wherein many deceive themselves. The reason is clear, and the deduction of it is easie. For if perfection consists in the unity of the foul with God, an union wrought by true love, and all christians as well as the Religious, are called to this union made by grace upon earth, and in Heaven by his glory. Finally, if it be commanded to all christians, and to all men as well as the Religious, to love God with all their heart, that is perfectly, and as much as they can in this mortall life by the ayd of grace, it followeth evidently, that these two estates which appear so unlike, are alike in the same obligation of feeking perfection, though by different wayes.

In fine, who can doubt so manifest a truth? no man can be ignorant that the

Commandement of Love is common to all men, of what estate soever they be. No man can derry but that Love is the bond of per-Col.3.14 fection, fo St. Paul callethit. There is no difference then but in the way and means that we are to take, to arrive to this perfection. There are divers, and we must esteem all, and regard them with respect. But if it be a question to make choice of fome way to arrive to this love, and if we must have Lawer and Maxims to conduct us thereunto, and to conserve us therein, it is certain, we cannot find them more pure, more divine, and more affired then in the Gofpel where the Son of God himself as Author of Christianity showes us the way, gives in the rule, and proposes to us the maxims which we ought to keep, to guide us to this love which he commandeth, to live in this union, and to arrive to this perfection whereto we are called, and therefore Chriflians living according to the rules of the Gofpel, shall infallibly arrive to this high perfection, and enjoy this most defirable union. So St. Paul speaking of Christianity, In Jes fus Christ, neither vircumcision availeth any thing, nor incircumcifion, but a new Creature, and as many as fallow this rate, grace be unto them and mercy. Under the name of Circumcifion, he teacheth us that nothing in the World, no efface is worthy to be effectied but that of

a now Creature. Christianity onely, giveth us the grace and power thereof; wherefore that is the rule whereof the Apostle here speaks. Whence we learn the eminency of the state of christianity above all others. We see then how true it is that we are all without exception, obliged and called of God to love

and to perfection. on our se

This and more, which might be faid on this subject is true; and yet notwithstanding it is certain, that christian perfection is as the Sun proposed to all christians in generall, the Precept of Love is equally given to all men, and consequently, all are obliged to the same perfection, which is all the Argument wherewith I would undeceive such christians as would exempt themselves from bath.

This granted, it rests onely to consider the qualities of love; it must be pure, perfect, and indissoluble, the three properties of love in Christianity: Pure, for it regards nothing but God; if it regard any thing else, it is not for God, nor according to God, whence it comes, that that which regards pure love, doth separate us from our selves, from all our interests, and alienates us from all creatures, as far as they obstruct our lave to God. This love makes us regard nothing but in the belief that God is there present by his

ther then as they bear the presence of God, for God being in all things, the soul that loveth him, enclines to him, seeks him, and finds him every where. This love must also be perfect, God saith so expressly: We must love him with all our soul, and with all our strength: There is no need of explicating these words, they are too cleer, and evidently shew us that God will have us love him with all that which we are, that is perfectly.

This love must lastly be indissoluble; no force must separate us from God, no violence must tear this love from our hearts; no creature in heaven or earth; no fear of death, or of the loss of all we enjoy; no good, either present or future, must separate us from this love which must be in us more powerfull then

death, more indiffeluble then unity.

Now making use of all that we have said, and reducing to practise all the proposed truths, we shall find what we sought in this tract; we shall see that by a necessary consequence, we are all obliged to divorce and separate our selves truly and strongly from all that hinders us from loving God perfectly. We are obliged to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect; this perfection is not without the true love of God; this love cannot be in us, but in as much as we are separated from our

they

Whence we learn, that a Christian obliged to the love of God, and to perfection, cannot arrive to this estate which he seeks and is commanded him, if on the one side he be not wholly subjected to God, and on the other altogether separated in spirit, conduct, and love from all the Creatures. Therefore he must apply himself earnestly to this exercise of subjecting himself to God, and devesting himself of himself; for it is certain, the soul can never acquire this divine spirit, nor artive to Evangelicall perfection, if she stay in her selfe, obey her own will; and follow her own motions.

felves, to take care of our selves, to think of our selves, to take care of our selves, to have a continual regard to our selves, and our self-Interests, to use the powers of our souls for our selves, and our own satisfaction, and not purely to please God. To love thus is to wear the maske and false appearance of vertue, but not to have the reality.

By these Principles of piety, it is easie to see, how dangerously they deceive them-felves, who speaking of Religious souls, who are in a most pure and perfect estate, and according to the eminency of their vocation, say they ought to be night Christians, as Stars in the Firmament, and perswade others that

they are not obliged to the perfection of imvard vertues, and that it is enough for them to become punctuall, and to live with order and fidelity in their exteriour conduct, making them believe that they are capable of no more; that this felf-defertion is above their ftrength, nay that it were folly to to leave themselves to live in such a general manner of abandoning themselves. This is a manifest errour, for not onely the religious estate, but even that of Christianity, obligeth all Christians to the practife of these vertues, seeing they are obliged to be perfect, according to the Commandement of Jesus Christ, as doth eafily appear by all the Motives handled in this fecond Part. Now if all they who aim at perfection in any profession whatsoever, must enter into this conduct of grace and subjection, if they must live devesting themselves to obey God more perfectly, and to live the life, of God, which is the life of a true christian, the true life of grace; what ought those Souls to do, who by particular graces and allurements of speciall favour are called by God, cherished and inriched with his gifts? O how great will these obligations appeare to those that consider them? O how ought fuch fouls to take care, and be vigilant to co-operate with the designs of God upon them, and to become faithful, according

ing to the eftate and fulnels of grace commu-

This would require a long deduction, for nothing is of more importance, or needs a more ample discourse to content our spirits, and satisfie our piety. But it shall suffice that we show the fundation and principles thereof; of which we shall now speak.

The conclusion of the second Part.

The care and vigilancy which a Soul must have which seeks perfection, and would live in true subjection to the grace and conduct of Jesus Christ.

We will show what this care and vigilanty ought to be.

Let us first enter into consideration of the excellencies of our soul, that knowing it,

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title sales

we may be ravished with its beauty, elevated and excited to conferve it carefully, in perfestion according to the designe of God upon us. This knowledge is not easie, for the foul is fuch a lively Image of the Divinity, and God hath invested her with so many lights, that our spirits are too feeble to fustain the beams thereof, and to penetrate the fplendor of this beauty. If we will speak of her, we must fay that she so perfectly represents her Prototype, God, that as we cannot better comprehend God, then in averring he is incomprehensible; so we cannot enter better into this knowledge of the perfect beauties of our foul, then in laying, she cannot be known. For all that we can fay of her, is below her, fo neer doth the approach to the infinite greatness, and inestable perfections of her Creator. The highest that we can say of her, that feems to imply the last draught of her perfection, is that she is a capacity of God, an Image, wherein the perfections of the Divinity are engraved; to as we may compare it to a Seal, wherein the Image of a Prince is perfectly and artificially cut: As the Seal is capable of receiving the foft wax applied to it, and imprints thereon a fecond Image; fo our foul, which is the Image of God, is capable of receiving God, and receiving him once, he bears a continual Image of him, his true refemblance.

refemblance. The soul therefore, in as much as she is the Image, is also a capacity of God, since as the Image she is capable of receiving God. And this capacity is the ground of her being, and containing in it all her perfections and beauty, comprehending all that can be faid of her.

It is not hard to penetrate this truth, if we consider the designs of God in the creation of the foul, for Faith teaches us that God alone is the end of our foul, her fulness, that he hath created her to enjoy his greatness, to affectate her into his glory, to communicate to her his divine perfections. In parfuit of this defigne it was, that he gave her fo great an amplitude and capacity, that the cannot be filled but with God, which caused Saint Bernard to Tay, that our foul may be occupated by all things in the world, but that she cannot be filled with any but God, who created her for himfelf alone, to fill, to live in her, and to advance her to the enjoyment not of gifts, not of grace onely, but of glory, and of the essence of Divinity.

All this begins upon earth, and is confummated and perfected in heaven; indeed it can not be in heaven, if it begin not upon earth, fince the foul after death enjoyer but what the hath merited in her life, for we fee that here below the foul receives her God by grace, the receives him in his loving communication,

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and

and the is filled of God by his Spirit which dwelleth in her, and in Heaven the possessed

him fully by glory,

By this possession, all her capacity is filled according to all Gods defignes upon her Joh. 3.2. Thus Saint John, We know that when he Shall appear, we shall be like to him, we Shall fee him asheis. Now, we cannot see God, and be like to him in glory, which is a pemanent efface without poffeffing him; and we cannot pofof him but in this capatity which is given us by God, which is the foundation of our beinguand all the perfection of our faul, fo great a perfection, that we conceive it farther then we know the greatness of God. For as God is great, this capacity is great, ample, and admirable. This deferves profound confideration, and may ferve to all men as a powerfull motive to fever themselves from all upon the earth, and to feek God only. for whom alone wo are created, who alone is our fidness. This trush discovers the favour we receive from this infinite goodness, the foul being a capacity of God, as also continually regarded by him, who feer her; yea, he fees her, and he regards her to raife her to himself, to fill her, and fully and perfectly to peffes her, in a manner worthy of God, and conformable to his love. He will be all things in this foul, he will be her life, her love, her good, her confidence,

fidence, her beart, her fpirit, her power, and her conduct's briefly, he will be her All, her fulnes upon earth by his graces, and in heaven by his glory. Hence therefore may we take occasion to admire, and eternally adore this infinite and inexhaustible bounty, which deigns to communicate himself, with fuch an extreme profusion of himself, who by an incomprebenfible counfell of his eternall Wifdom, hath created man upon the earth onely capable of his divine communications, who orly is a pure capacity of God, who gives him power to receive the abundance of his gifts, and to bear the greatness of his Divinity. Affoon as we reflect hereupon, we shall fee the duties of our foul, what our care and vigilancy must be: For the foul being a capacity of God, what remains for her to do, but to render her felf worthy to poffes him, and to be filled with him, and altogether to abandon her felf to his conduct and grace. She is obliged to effeem nothing but him, to live onely for him, being created onely for bim, and this being the end of her being and life, the must have no care upon earth, but to suffer her self to be filled with God; to be possessed and ruled by his first, and by his power. Thus we are obliged to two things: one to have a care and bigilancy to take all away that may fe-K A parate

of his divine and loving communications. The other, to have a like vigilancy over our felves, over our motions, over our defires, over our intentions, and over our actions, that they depend on God, and be wholly fubmitted to his loving conduct. Let us yet fay this more cleerly, if it be possible, in two words: The foul ought to have no care, but that God be in her, repose in her, dwell in the bottom of her heart, fill and possess her, according to all the designes that he hathon her. This done, and the foul living in this care with fidelity, God reposing in her, as in the Throne of his love, will communicate to her what gifts, and enrich her with what graces he pleaseth, and in fine, conduct her in the wayes that he defires, the foul having no other desire then that God may be in ber, and the in God, that is, after the manner that God ought, and will be, according to the greatness and excess of his love. This is the One thing that is necessary, whereof Jesus speaks to Saint Martha, the source of all happiness, the top of all perfection, which Jesus calleth in Magdalen, the better part. Let us pray to God to place us in this happy estate, to make us penetrate his truths; Let us give our felves to bim to enter therein, and banishing all care, all thoughts, all love, ·let

Tuk. 10.

let us onely regard Jesus; Let us require nothing but Jesus; Let us love none but bim, who loves us above his life; Let us cast our selves at his feet like Mary Magdalen, and there melt our hearts, and consume the poyson fon that is in them with the beams of this Sun of love, that he may replenish us with his grace, with his love, and with his spirit, that we may live onely by Jesus, and as Joh. 20. another Magdalen, seek nothing but Jesus; 13. Let us now propose the dispositions necessary to attain so happy and desireable a Being.

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It is now time to enter into the praffife of that verue whereof we treat, and that we let our felves on work, to acquire the

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THE THIRD PART.

Proposing divers DISPOSITIONS
and VERTUES necessary for a
Christian to arrive to that perfection whereto be is obliged by
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CHAP. I.

What those DISPOSITIONS are, and how necessary they are to the practise of VERTUE.

T is now time to enter into the practise of that vertue whereof we treat, and that we set our selves on work, to acquire the

spirit to live the life that God requires of us, whereto we were called from the first time that we became Christians. To attain this happy

happy estate, there is need of continual Application and travail, for, we must not think to arrive thereto at one leap, but we must bring diffesitions suitable to so worthy a subjest, and labour not onely to attain hereto, but also to persevere therein; which we must do the more willingly and couragiously, in that we are certain, this way is the foundation of all our bappiness, the true way to Christian perfection, and makes us live the life of grace,

whereto we are called.

The first thing whereto we must bend our study, is to know and acquire the inward dispositions necessary to lead us to Christian perfection, and to make us live the life of grace, which is the true life of a Christian; this we are to learn in this third Part. And for as much as this Doctrine is proper for all forts of vertues, we will speak first of it in generall, as well that we may the more eafily come to the knowledge of the particular, as because many feem to feek vertue, and frequent the exercises of Christian piety, yet think not upon a thing fo necessary, nor know what this dispofitien is, or wherein the spirit of vertue doth confit, which is the foul and form of action. So that laying hold onely on the outfide of vertue, and confidering it but as a body without a foul, they are deceived in their imaginations and believing they do much, they promise

promife to themselves great profit, rendring themselves punttuall, and taking a great heed to some exteriour practises of vertues which they propose to themselves. We see many with much vigilancy every day or week, take fome vertue to practice, they watch if they are wanting to emergent occasions, and carefully mark their defaults, to accuse, and, (if it be possible) to amend themselves: but after long practife, we see they make small profit, because they forget the interiour, and put not themselves into the spirit of vertue, to tractife it with necessary and convenient dispositions. To prevent therefore the inconveniences which occur in this subject, we must observe that in a Christian life, all estates wherein the Christian foul may find it felf, and all the vertues that she can practife, have ordinarily the Diffositions which ought to accompany or precede her, and vertue hath a fpirit, which is as its effence, or rather as its foul, which, as a form doth enliven and perfectionate ber.

The foul that will live the life of grace, and will acquire folid and Christian vertues, must carefully have regard to fuch dispositions that the may possess them, to do the action which she doth, perfectly; seeing that in her, vertue

is exteriour and fuperficiall.

She must further acknowledge and feek

fay) what is her effence, that practifing that vertue, the may effect it in her spirit, that is, beare inwardly the sense of that vertue, as outwardly the produceth the action. Thus shall the practise vertue in her heart inwardly, as the does practise it by her hands outwardly.

This is founded upon generall principles, that the exteriour is nothing without the interiour; so that we must first labour to form and perfectionate our interiour, which is to exteriour actions, as the wheels of the Clock are to the weights, or rather as the soul is to the

body.

All the World holds this for truth; yet we feem not to confider enough, what the meaning of interiour is, that onely the intention must be good, as many think and believe; that it suffices in all things to have a good intention, and simple regard to the Action. But when we speak of the interiour, we mean the bettom of the foul, which is to Christian actions life, as the Earth is to the fruits the produceth, and as the root is to the Tree, which it nourisheth and enliveneth. The bottom of the foul is the true principle and life of all our actions. By the bottom of the foul, we understand a true and reall goodness which is in the foul, a pure intention that accompanies her ; grace that affifts her, necessary and fuitable ble dispositions to the vertues which are in her, all this I call the bottom of the foul. What will it profit a man to practife an action of outward humility, and to do it with a good intention, if in the bottom of his foul he hath a proud will? what doth it serve for in a Christian, to get the true vertue of charity outwardly, to give alms, and be liberall, and in the bottom of his joul, to bear a heart pitiless and covetous? It is certain, that after this manner, he thall never acquire vertue, though he had all the good intentions in the world; because the foundation of his foul, (which is the true interiour) is not good: the first thing he must do, is, to perfectionate the bottom of his foul, and to form his interiour after the manner proposed, to know the essence and spirit of vertue. Let us propose a particular example of some vertue, as a rule for all the rest; we will take humility, which is necessary for all Christians. If we would acquire this vertue, and practife it, we must first know wherein it confifts, that when we would produce the acts thereof, we may form them in the interiour spirit of this vertue, conformable to our knowledge of it. For how can we practife a vertue, if we know it not? How shall we perform an act of humility, if we know not what humility is? We must then study to know the vertue that we would acquire,

duity, give us the spirit of it, without knowing it. But speaking according to the ordinary mayer of the practise of vertues, we must know them, that when we would acquire them, by practise, we must endeavour to do the Acts, and accompany them with a sense

and thought of vertue.

We must further yet put our selves into dispositions interiour and convenient to the vertue we would acquire, as in the vertue of humility, it must be in an esteem of God alone, in a mean opinion of our selves, in a defire of confusion and contempt, and to do this from the bottom of the foul. The foul being in thefe dispositions, will endeavour to apply her thoughts thereto, when it shall be time to do any outward action thereof. For example, If the do an act of an ward humility, it will excite in her heart a thought and a fense of humility, and amaken in her fome disposition conformable to this vertue, and fo the will do Rom. 17. this exteriour Act, by an esteem and pure 16. defire of humility, with mean esteem of her felf. To do an action after this fort, is that which I call to do it in the spirit, and in the dispositions of vertue.

To see how necessary this is, we need no other Witness then Experience; no other Judge then Reason; for how can we (for example,)

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example,) get the vertue of humility, though we should perform infinite and extraordinary alls of it, if we know not this vertile? and if in practifing it outwardly, we reflect not upon it felf? How can we conceive that a man can attain this vertue by any extraordinary practice whatfoever, if we bring contrary dispositions? It is evidently impossible. We must therefore take care to establish it in the dispositions of vertue, and first labour to form her interiour; for he that shall have an ill foundation in his foul, cannot produce good fruits. Can we acquire humility, if at the fame time that we produce exteriour acts of humitity, our foul is filled with esteem of our selves, our spirit full of doubleness, out sense given to curiofity, our whole heart twed to our proper interests? It is cleer, the to doing, ie will we must then conbe an impossible labour. fels, that to attain true Christian vertues, it is necessary to have inward care, (that is to say) that the first thing we must study, is to take care that the bottom of our fouls be good; If the root be holy, fo are the branches. Then we must labour to acquire the dispositions necescessary to accompany vertue; to do other-wise, is to take the shadow, and to leave the substance, to bear the image of vertue, and to have the reality of vice; it is to pursue contimially, and to take nothing but flyes. We

Rom 11.

fee the experience in them, who think only of the exteriour, and have no care but of certain superficiall pradices and rules, that look not to the bottom of the interiour, but very little or afar off; fuch fouls are void of God and without vertue, having only a deceitful atpearance; like false pearls, which are filled but with wind, mountains in fher, but touch them, and you shall see come out of them nothing but smoke. Vertue is an heritage too noble, it must be bought with good money, I mean, it must be gain'd by practices suitable to her dignity. Let us apply our particular subject to that we have said in generall. We treat in this Discourse of the life of grace, of Christian perfection, and of the subjection wherein a foul ought to be towards God; and it being proposed, how the swire true vertue, it consequently treats of mubilating the spirit in our selves, the care and conduct we have of our felves, to refigne us to God, and not to live, but in subjection to his spirit onely, and to his grace. We have made the necessity of this estate sufficiently appear, and the obligation that we have thereto; there refts nothing but to shew the means whereby we may enter into these dispositions suitable to her, without which we may truly fay, that the foul shall never attain the true and constant practice of vertue, which yet is necessary to many

many who think not thereon; For, we may averl, (not without fears and regret) that a great number of fouls Shut the door of their hearts to God, oppose themselves to Jesus Christ and his grace, and by confequence will never arrive to perfection, what pains foever they take, because they neglect and disesteem the practices of true vertue, and flight them, to adhere too much to their own fense, to love themselves too much, and to seek too greedily their proper interests. This is that (to speak properly) which hinders them from resigning themselves to the conduct of God. Hence it proceeds, that by too much feeking after their own fatisfaction, their profit, and the contentment of their spirit, they grieve the spirit of God, captivate grace, and lose themselves in seeking themselves; and in flead of uniting themselves to God, they feparate themselves from him, and (which is more to be feared) they go out of the ordinances of heaven, and from the counfels of God, to follow their own will, their own defires, and their own conduct, to tye themselves to their own flattering affections. It is they must give remedy to their own mishap; Let us leave them, to speak to fouls who will quit them-I felves wholly to acquire the happy poffession of vertues.

gore to be christians, then to be men (there being a great difference between them;) fo the practizes implied for maining thefe two Severall practifes, whereof we may make life to above that of a man, as grace is above manner,

Ince the life of a Christian must be a life of grace, a life representing the life of God, expressing in man the perfections of Divinity, it followeth that the actions of a Chriflian, proceeding from fuch a Principle, be great and fuitable to fuch an estate, and worthe grace of adoption. And if the vertues of a Christian are so worthy and rare; certainly the dispositions must be also great, the way to obtain them fingular, and the practice extraordinary; For as there is great difference between the morall vertues of Philosophy, and the supernatural of a Christian, so must the practice hereof be different and extraordinary.

The wifest of the times past, gave Precepts to form man, and instate him in the most perfect use of reason; they prescribed Laws to overcome and subject the passions to the reasonable will, the most noble part of the foul. But all this confidered, is no more then to make us perfect men, that is, very reafonable; but our bufinels is to make our felves

felves perfect Christians: and as it is much more to be Christians, then to be men (there being a great difference between them;) fo the practifes imposed for attaining these two eftates, are different, one as much advanced above the other, as the state of a Christian is above that of a man, as grace is above nature. We must now build upon this foundation, and advance the edifice of Christian perfection upon the principles we intend to propose, Therefore we must speak and act as Christians, not as Philosophers. I say then, to attain Christian vertues, we must before all things, have a great defire of Christian perfection, and a resolution to labour in the acquisition of true vertues, as much as is necessary, and as God requires of us. This defire must be efficacious and permanent, from the bottom of our heart. It is good also to awaken it often, and to form acts thereof with application of Birit.

The first means to obtain vertue is prayer. The foul that applies her self with perseverance to prayer, cannot fail of the pessession of vertue. Prayer is understood two wayes; first as a demand, as if we should say, that if we demand vertue of God, he will give it us. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that give b to all men liberally. This Proposition is true in this sense; but this demand must be

accom-

Tam, 1.5.

accompanyed with these considerations, true desire of vertue, perseverance in prayer, a vigilancy to become faithful to the grace that God communicates to us; otherwise our demand will be without effect, our prayer with out fruit. It is not sufficient for the foul that would be faid to arrive at Christian perfection, to nourish in it self vertuous desires, and to demand them of God, if the be not also careful to demand them as she ought, and if the doth not with vigilancy labour in the practise and exercise of these vertues. God will have us co-operate with his grace, and put to our hand to do with him what he will operate in us; fo that to obtain vertues, we must demand them of God, but in demanding them, we must labour therein. Thus we must understand the acquisition of vertues by prayer. This Proposition is built upon this truth, That we cannot have vertue unless God give it, and God gives it not, but with an intent that we should co-operate therein, and that we should labour on our parts, thewing in this co-operation, the fidelity of our fouls. For this end hath God leads us to the acquifition : live see for nevig

There is yet another way of obtaining vertues by prayer, understanding by prayer meditation, or as we fay ordinarily, mentall prayer. The foul, which applies it felf to this exercise, confidering the greatness of the Divi-

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perities of Faith the beauty and flobs. its of eternall things, the inconflancy of temparall, the varity of all in the World, cally
apprehends the love of Truth, and a contempo
of vapity, (two fundations necessary to the
perfections of a Christian life), the foul by this
exercise, remaining united as divesto Genreceives the rows of this diving light, which is the life and may of our forthe and if the perfevere with fidelity must as last be wound countries love which he fo contemplates By this means entring into the enjoyment of divine love (which is alwayes liberall of Communications,) the will infallibly secoive ched with most pure gifting agreeable to the greatures of God, who will give her more then fufficiently graces convenient for th ving in the perfection of Christian Kenney wherein appeares the necessity and profit of this manner of freyer, which elevater us to Gadal capies us to enter into a tenver fation with God, uniter us to him, eplightens us trans form usand disposes us to the life of grace, and leads us to the acquifition and polletion of true Kertuer Food is not to necessary to the life of the body, as this manner of prayer to the life of the foul, and the acquifition of Vertues. ince the will

The fecond meanes to acquire Christian vertues.

vertues, is mortification, which is abfolutely necessary to the foul that will live the life of grace, that is to fay, Christianly. We must remember, and intentively confider that we are all the Children of Adam, living his life, following the inclinations of the being of Adams to be christian, is to be the Child of Jefus Christ, to live his life, wholly to follow the Bitit, motions, and holy inclinations of Jefus. Christ: into this state and new-being, we are put by Baptisme. As many of you Claith St. Gal. 3.27. Paul) as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, meaning they are made like the Son of God; they are by grace, that which Jefus Christ is by nature.

This truth granted, it is easie to compre-Hend the necessity of mortification. If to be christians, we must be re-invested in Jesus Christ, that is, live of his spirit, and follow his motions and inclinations, then to arrive to this happiness, we must uncloath our selves of the firit and inclinations of Adam, and we muff, to speak in the words of the Apostle, Put off the old man, and put on the new man; this Col.3 9, cannot be done but by mertification, which is the more necessary, in that the inclinations and first of Adam, are as much different from those of Jesus Christ, as the Heaven is distant from the Earth. These two firsts are as contrary one to the other, as the animal is

to the spiritual, according to the Apostle, Cor. 15. who faith, The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is from Heaven, and cannot accord together. Now to argue by the rule of contraries, we must say that to establish the one, it is necessary to annihilate the other; to plant good, we must root out evill: 10 he that would love christianity, that is, according to the Spirit and vertue of Jesis Christ, must take away and mortifie the fpirit and inclinations of Adam, which are in all, alwayes contrary to Jesus Christ. The Son of God came into the Joh 3.8. world, as Saint John faith, to destroy the works of the Devill. The spirit of Adam is a sinner, and his inclinations are but concupifcences, works of the flesh, therefore is the Sonne of God come to deftroy them. We must also labour and co-operate with him to destroy in us, and to root out of us, all that fin hath put in us, wherein mortification affifts us.

This that Divinity which we call mysticall, teaches us, which requires that a christian to arrive to that perfection whereto God calleth him, passeth through the purgative life, in the wayes of mortification, annihilation and resignation, that by this exercise, the soul may purge and cleanse it self from all that is in her opposite to grace and the true possession of God. This Dostrine is sounded on a Truth which

which most know, but consider not sufficiently : That the whole nature and being of man is corrupt, all his inclinations turned to evill, carrying the centre, the fource and feed of all vice and imperfection in it. Now to order it fo, as that this nature of Adam, this being, may be poffeffed of God, replenished with vertuous inclinations, and that he may have in himself true charity the seed and principle of all Christian vertues; he must necessarily take from it the evill that is in it, for the good and perfection cannot be there but in taking away, and rooting out the corruption and imperfection, which cannot be done without a ferious and continual mortification inward or outward. Whence we learn, that to acquire christian vertues, it is not enough to demand them of God by prayer, which we call a demand, nor to consider them in mental prayers, and to make good resolutions thereon; it is not enough to know them and defire them, nor to do acts of them, and to produce many profifer of them; but we must also root out of the foundation of our foul, all that which is contrary to vertue. The man who defires to live a good christian, and aspires to true vertue, as the onely way to Heaven, must not lo much busic himself in the acquisition of vertues by the practife of them, as he must labour to root out of his heart, and pull out of the

Part III

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the foundation of his being, all oppositions, inclinations and customs contrary to true vertue. For as foon as he hath emptied his heart of all that is displeasing to God, and contrary to him, God will from that moment, replenif and poffof his heart, and liberally extend to him the graces and vertues necessary for him; but withall, according to the measure in which God gives them to him, he must be faithfull on one fide to correspond with the grace given him; on the other, he must labour to render himself more and more capable of the spirit and possession of God; he endeavouring to cleanse and purify his heart, and God continually replems bing, and confectating it for his own dwelling, and fandifying it by his grace. Algundo sousi si ass

By this amorous combate, God always gives, and is always augmenting his gifts, man receives, and in receiving, disposes himself more and more, to receive more abundantly the smeet bounties of God: all which is done in the soul proportionably to her purifying and mortifying her self from all that is disagreeable and contrary to the spirit of God. By montification and the purgative life, we not onely understand corporall austerities, such as affect the senses as macerations, fastings, and other exercises, which rob the senses of what is most agreeable to it (which although they be good and

and preferbles and fometimes decessary, yet ate they not principall) but we apply this Destrine first to interious mortificacions, where by the fow purifies her heart, annibilates her fourchs therein, and pulls away the rests of imperfections; and of all that is diffleafing to God By this exercise, the fifter, as much as the can the feeds of felf-leve, though hid in every thing; the fiver to gain a perfect withdry over ber felf sherprincipall dore is to annihibate het will, her intentions, her desires, her thoughts and intlinations to those of Gods chooling in all things that which is most pires mod conformable to the Spirit of Jesus, most opposite and contrary to her own inclinations. and unruly affections. Hereunto she wholly additts her felf; herein she is very vigilant; the knows it generally, amexime, that the more the heart of man is filled with the creatures, and the love and regard of himself, the more the is feparated from God, voyd of his fpirit and true vertue: Therefore the endeavours to externife her felf in this interput montefication: Another Resson which bbligeth us to the fritt and exercise of mortific custon, is, that the Devil makes uf of our inclinations of our babits of our defines, and of our felf love; yea, he makes use of our felves against out selver; and of our house, subjected as well by the fin of Adam, as our actuall

cast us away, and to separate us from God, even in things most holy, and the most interiour, and therefore to avoid the perils, and to take the meapons from the hands of our enemie, whereof he makes use to undo us, we must necessarily pass through the purgative life; we must go out of our selves, out of the life of Adam, to be in Jesus Christ, and to live of his life, and we must mortise our selves to make place for God, and take from our heart all that may displease him, that is opposite to his grace, and by this exercise, we shall easily arrive to the acquisition of Christian vertues.

CHAP. III.

That the adherence of a Soul to Jesus Christ is the most perfect means to possess all Christian vertue.

Hat vertue which we call Christian, is a hidden treasure, hid in God, the very life of a Christian according to the Dodrine of the Apostle, is such, it is the Pearl in the Gospel, which he who would obtain beaven must seek and buy; he must seek it in God with all diligence, and buy it at the price of all the world. Nothing is more previous then true vertue, which

Col.3.3. Mat. 13.

refus

which alone renders us like to God, and worthy of Paradise, all things else are nothing but vanity, amuzement of spirit, and unprositable travell.

Of known and ordinary means to arrive at the possession of so rich a treasure, there is one to be preferred before all others, which though little considered, and, perhaps, little known, is most important, without which all others are ineffectuall. This is the adherence of our soul to sesses thrist; This puts us into possession of vertues: He who adheres to sesses the sone spirit with him, possesses him, and in him all vertues.

To comprehend this truth, we must remember that we faid, that Jefus Christ is our All; whence it followeth, he is our humility, our love, our patience, our vertue; and he that shall possess him, shall possess all in him; He is the foundation, the treasure and riches of the foul : He is made unto us, faith Saint Paul, wif I Cor. 1. dom, and righteousness, and sandification and ?. redemption. Who then would have wisdom, righteoufness, and other vertues, let him adhere to Jesus: He that would acquire and possess perfection, let him posses Jesus, for in him, are Col. 2 3. hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Apostle explains this further, saying, The Rom. 8. eternall Father giveth us his Son, and with him freely giveth us all things; by which words,

he not onely implies, that by his merces, by his grace, and for his love we have all, but moreover, that with Jefur Christ (note the energy of this word, with Jesus) we have all, possessing him we possess all; we must add, that if we do not possess, nor adhere to Jesus Christ, we cannot have true christian vertue.

Heb. 13.

This truth is not hard to conceive, if we consider the effence of thristian vertue and perfection, which is the spirit of Jesus, or Jesus himself living in us, and working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, saith the Apostle. Our ordinary manner of speaking, teacheth us as much, for we fay, vertue and christian perfection, have their beginning in grace from whence they spring, and what goes out of a just foul, that we call grace. Now the foul cannot be in grace nor just, but by the habitation of the holy spirit, living and acting in her. So the Apostle, The love Rom. 5. 5. of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy.

Ghost, which is given to us, whence we infer, that if to live in christian vertue, we must be in grace, and if grace be no other then the holy spirit, living in us and there acting, feeing the holy spirit is no other then the very spirit of Jesus, it followeth evidently, that to live christianly, we must possess true vertues, and to possess them, we must possess Jesus,

Tefur, and adhere to him, for grace and right trousness confists in this possession.

Let us rife higher, and come to the fource hereof, Faith teaches us, that in Adam we are devested of innocence, fallen from the state of grace and perfection, whereto we were destined by Creation, and by the first defignes of God. By this fall we have lost for ever the vertues, graces, and supernaturall gifts, wherewith the infinite goodness of God had inriched and cloathed the first man. At the fight of this misfortune, God being moved, onely by his own goodness to be merciful to us, would raise us from this fall, and inrich us more thenever with his graces and heavenly favours s where finne abounded, faith the Apostle, grace did much more Rom 5.20 abound. To raise us to this happiness, he would give us a new beginning of life and grace, his onely Sonne Jesus Christ, who being made man by the mystery of the Incarnation, is established Father and principle of that being and life of grace which should be in man. As we participate in fin of the evil of Adam, and are with him despoiled of all vertues and grace, adhering to him, as to our naturall principle, and have with him his being and his nature. So adhering to Jefus Christ as to our Head, our new Principle, we participate of his being, of his first, of his grace,

grace, and of his bertuel. This witnesseth the Forerunner of the Messiah, who faith, of John. 16. his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace. From this being, deliberately confidered, we may derive worthy documents to: our subject: First, we see how much we ought to adhere to Jesus, if we will live his life, and participate his vertues, which are the onely Christian vertues; for in as much as we adhere to Adam, we are not capable of any thing, but to live the life of sinners, we have no right to the life of grace, to practife or possess any Chrstian vertue. If we will live the life of grace, and obtain power to practife and possess vertue, we must lay hold of Jesus Christ, and to receive it of him, we must adhere to him; for we cannot possess him, but in adhering to him; wherein appeareth also the necessity of this adherence. From this truth, we draw a second document, how much they deceive themselves, who speak meanly and indifferently of true Christians, or of a thing proportioned to our reason and being; For according to the Principles of Christianity, and words of Saint Paul, as Christians, we must Rom. 13. put on the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, the gifts of the graces and vertues of Jesus; in such manner, that we may be like unto him, in fuch a degree of perfection, that we may bear in us an expression and a lively image of the life and

and vertues of Jefus. Christian vertues is not animitation of the life and vertues of a persection man, not of Adam, considered in his Insurency and originall Justice; to have vertues after this manner, were not much; it is a lively Image of the vertues of Jefus, Manually of the fefus in man: As men are distinguished by their babits, so are true Christians from others, by these vertues; and these vertues are distinguished from all others (if there be any) by the spirit of Jefus.

Here then appears the divinity and perfection of Christian vertues, they are the vertues of Jesus himself, according to which, the Apostle saith, we are new creatures: As a Constitute of Jesus, we must bear his Image 17.

which is divine and celesticall; not that of Adam, which is humane and terrestriall, that is, our life and vertues must not be of a man, but of God; life and vertues as different, according to the Dodrine of the Apostle, as beaven is distant from the earth, as unlike as Jesus is to sinfull Adam.

Finally, by these Principles, we learn (and it is that I would most perswade) that the way to obtain Christian vertues, the most powerfull means to arrive to persection, is, to adhere to Jesus, to prostrate our selves frequently before the Throne of his great-

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nels, to subject our selves to his foveraign. ty, to give our selves to him and to his vertues, to endeavour to be replenished with his fpirit, to bear him in the bottom of our hearts, that as the centre is in the midst of its circumference, he may be in the midft of our bearts, as the centre of our being and our fouls: We must look upon this practice as very important to the foul, and adhering to Jefus, and possessing him, she shall possess all in him, and easily obtain all from him; a truth none can be ignorant of that do acquire vertues; We must have them in Jesus, and of Jesus, their onely principle, Object and Prototype, upon whom we must mould our adiens, and form our life; By him the eternall Father speaks to us; by him he teacheth us; In a word, by him he giveth us this life, the life of grace, the life of perfection, the life which is no other then Jefus living in us: He that hath the Son, bath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life, faith the beloved Disciple. What is there more cleer? there onely remains to practife what we have faid.

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The means, whereby we may arrive to the adberence of our Jouls with God, and the obstacles which hinder it.

O know truth, and not practife it, avails little. God in the Gofpel, threatens many stripes to the servant that knoweth the Luk. it. will of his Lord and Mafter, and doth not ac. 47. cording to it; To what purpose is it to love vertue and embrace vice? to praise good, and to follow evil, is to be condemned out of our own mouths. We fay it is not enough to love, to esteem and to know Christian vertues, as others do, but we must bear the effeets of them, and make use of them as God requires: We are therefore now to shew how we must practise what hath bin already faid. To do a Christian action, requireth not onely that it be good, and done in grace, but it must be done with the spirit of grace, the spirit of Jesus Christ, which he pours into us in such manner, that all the vertue which is in us comes from him, with fuch dependence, that as the members receive of the Head, so Jefus being our Head, and we his members, we can receive nothing but from him in the state of grace, which is fo true and necessary, that

he himself saith, As the branch cannot bear Joh. 15 4. fruit of it felf, except it abide in the Vine, no no more can ye, except ye abide with me; our foul is barren, and without the fruit of grace, if the dwell not in Jesis Christ, and take not from him all her juice, life and true vertues.

To adhere to this holy spirit, a man must be devested of himself, severed from the creatures, not onely by will and good intention, but by effect also; he must have a continuall recourse by grace, with a spirit of submission and dependency upon grace, that it may have pomer to all freely in him; we must regard the vertue in Jesus Christ, and imitate it, especially those vertues which are most eminent in his life, the bases and foundation of solid perfedion, as profound humility, purity of heart, contempt of the world, and the like folid vertues, onely appearing in the Son of God, But we must take heed, that in the practice and exercife of vertues we feek them not fo much because of their excellency, nor to become thereby better or more perfect, nor for our own interests, but chiefly, and above all, for the glory of God, for the honour of Jesus Christ. imitating him in our life and actions, that we may live in a manner pleasing to him; and fince the end of our actions must be the glory of God, it is convenient, that we have no other design then to please and glarifie him.

If you defire a more express practife, I propose it thus. When we have formed some good resolution in prayer, or that the doing of some act of vertue is in question, we must presently give our selves up to the Some of God, that we may accomplish this act of verme, according as he defires, and according to the defigns of his Croffe, it not being neceffary to form any particular intention or defign; as for example, being to form a refolution to practife humility, let us fay in our heart, I give my felf to thee my Jefus, to enter into thy fpirit of bumility, I will paffe with thee all the dayes of my life in this boly vertue. I invoke the power of thy fpirit upon me, that it may abase my pride, and I will keep my felf with thee in humility, I offer thee the opportunities of Humility, which shall present themselves in my life; blesse them if it so please thee, I renounce my felse and all things, which may hinder me from having part in the grace of thy humility.

The like may be done in all other vertues or good intentions which we offer to God; in this manner they shall be founded on 72 für Christ, made in the spirit of grace, not in our own spirit, made truly christian.

Let us not contemn this practife, neither as too much elevated, nor as superfluous, it is easie and necessary; we speak not of a hu-

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1 Cor. 6.

more action, but a christian action, perfect and morthy of God, suitable to our condition and dignity, whereto we are elevated by the grace of christianity, which is so great, that St. Peter

1 Pet. 2 9. calls us a chosen Generation, a boly Nation, a peculiar people, and to crown all this, St. Paul faith, we are the members of Jesus Christ, and as

fuch, we must live no other life then his, not act but by bis fpirit, and in bis intentions. Up on this foundation, may be built all that can be faid or thought of the perfections and excellencies of christianity; all is faid, when we say Jesus is our head, and we his members, he is the principle of the grace necessary for us in all things, we must take all of him, he is the end of our life and actions, we must refer them all to him, and to his bonour. In fine, he is the prototype and the exemplary cause, we must all regard, and continually contemplate him, not onely to imitate him, but to imprint his life and vertues in us. This is the essence of christian perfection, which St. Paul means in those words full of love : My little

Christ be formed in you. He would have Jesus Christ formed in us, great words, which represent to the life, the excellency of Christian vertues. This it is which I demand of fouls, and would cause it to be understood if possible, as being of importance to reme-

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dy many abuses, and unprofitables things which we meet with in the practife and or dinary exercises of Christians, for want of taking hold of things in the beginning, and not entring into the spirit of grace, for want whereof do we not fee many fouls who keep most holy constitutions and very good rules, others that do frequent actions of vertue, many who follow and oblige themfelves to Spiritual exercises and practises, yet nevertheless, advance not towards perfection, nor have any folid vertue; They alwayes labour, but never gain any; they continually travail, but never arrive at their journeys end. Though all that they do, feems to be done in grate, and that, (as is believed) they have not their conscience charged with any sinne, yet they profit not in any manner; all that can be faid of fuch persons is, that they are not the worfe. What is the cause of this evill? whence comes it, that they profit nothing amidft fo much care and Travel? The evil comes from this, that fuch fouls have not sufficient recourse nor submission to grace, they are not tyed to Jefus Christ; they scarce think that there is a Jesus Christ; they have no distrust of themselves; they seek not God, but their felf-fatisfaction, and their particular Interefts, and which is worse, by a fecret and dangerous consequence they rely upon their own courage, M 4

to, upon their travel and extreifes and promise to themselves too much of their own frength, and tying themselves to divers practifes whereof they make no, they tye also their bappiness thereto. If you demand whence it comes, that they have not folid wertues, it is pasily perceived, it is because they amuse themselves much in unprefitable things, trifles, and exteriour things, they enter not into the practife of true and folid vertues, they effect them not, and hardly know them; if they do practife them, it is but Superficially, they have but the appear rance of vertues all that they possess thereof, is like the graffe upon the boufe top, which withers away of it felf; of which we must take heed, and carefully remedy it, leaft passing our life fo, we travel in vain, and run without arriving to our end, and that under those fair appearances in the most part of our actions, we be not of the number of the foolife Virgini, of them to whom God faith at the houre of death, I know you not, for God tells us, not every one that faith unto me, Lord , Lord , Shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And certainly, there are an infinite number of christians, who will find themfelves deceived, when God shall make manifeft the fecrets of bearts, and judge the ju-Cor.4.5. flice of men, because that believing them-

Mat. 25.

A6.17.

felvestrichingood works, and charged with the fruits of christian penitence, they shall find in their hands nothing but wind, and shall fee in their life, nothing but appearances of Verther And therefore in an affaire to important we must be vigilant to act ebriftianly, and to do works worthy of God, which shall gain us the eternall posteffion of God. This subject being of high enterprise, I will propose the dispositions, which feem to be most neces from bad, true from falle, the field from that fund This with this thirt of true hows the

The first Disposition.

Of the fpirit of Faith, and the necessity thereof.

He first and principal Disposition which the foul that willive Christianly, must have, is Faith; He that cometh to God, faith the Apostle, must believe that he is ; and Heb. 11.6. without Faith, it is impossible to please bim.

This Disposition is not onely the first, but equie of all other ; what the rest is to the tree, the foundation to the building, the mother to the infant, the fame is Faith to all vertues, and to a Christian life. Whence on the frisit of Fairb depends all the happiness and perfection on of a Christian fouls or on the other fide, from dais

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from littleness of Faith, springs all the evils all the abominations in the life of man, The foul that is guided by the spirit and light of faith, knows what it is to love, and what to detest; for faith is nothing but truth, the spirit of faith is properly the spirit of eternal truth, wherein is feen the frength of faith. He therefore that hath faith hath the frit of truth, and by this fpirit of truth, if he possessit, and foffer it to guide him, he eafily discerns good from bad, true from false, the flesh from the Spirit. This faith, this Spirit of truth shews the foul what the God is that sheadoreth; from thence he is carried on to love him, to fear him, and to live in a continual respect of his divine presence. Faith, faith God, is the principle of all being, the end and centre of all things; that out of him, all is but a dream, that all creatures are vain, that God is in all things, that he gives life and being to all; that all things depend on him. This makes the foul know that she ought to esteem God alone, and all that belongs to God; that all the rest is nothing but vanity and lies. This light and spirit of faith teacheth that God is eternall truth, his works are truth, his words and promifes true and infallible. This causes the foul which is guided by the spirit of faith constantly to adbere, and strongly to relie on the truths and maxims of Christianity, which

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are the works and the words of Jesus, God and man; she believes firmly, that what he hath said will come to pass, what he hath promised is certain, the truth that the eternall Father hath revealed to us by his Son are infallible and eternally the Son of God, who is the truth uncreated, is a God which can neither deceive nor lye.

Hereupon the foul, by this fpirit of truth, remains indiffolubly tyed to all that God hath faid and revealed by his Son, fo as she cannot tafte, nor understand any humane reafon or object; She will not hearken nor adhere to any thing but to the truth of faith; she will only follow the maximes that Jefus Christ hath left us in his Goffel, and imitate the example of his life & divine vertues, the rost she despites as unworthy a Christian foul, which ought not to be guided by, nor live, but in the spirit of truth; and certainly, so the Christian must live. All the world confesseth, that God alone is truth, that the onely spirit of God is the only firit of truth; whence it appears, that all that is not God, and according to the spirit of God, is but vanity and lyes. This granted, how can they live, who have any other objet then God? Here let us make reflettion on the point, we shall shew how much they are deceived, who in matters of faith, and in the conduct of their life separate themfelves sdi

felves from this spirit of truth to feek humane reason, wayes of prudence, maximes of hise men, who measure perfection and Christian very their according to their proper sense, according to their proper sense, according to their own spirits, such souls cannot but fall into an abisse of errows and doubts, or at least such persons believe tittle, doubt of all things, live a life more like Philosophers then Christians, and make no great account of a thousand good things which are usefull in Christianity.

To remedy this, they must learn that faith, the spirit of truth, and the life of Christ, must be the onely rule and guide of our actions and life, in such manner, that to go out of this rule and conduct, either on the right hand or left,

is alwayes to erre from the right way.

of truth, we cleerly see how necessary it is to be established in the spirit of faith, and to take truth for our object and conduct. All other spirits are deteitfull and lying, whence it followeth, that souls that will hive in Christian perfection, must commence by this exercise, and must necessarily lay the spirit of faith as the foundation of vertue, if they would obtain any. As faith is the door whereby we enter into the house of God, and are made children of the Church, so must she be the beginning of the life of a Christian, and the

the fririt wherewith he liver, and endeayours to acquire vertue. Where we must mark in the conduct of fouls, how necessary it is to establish them in the spirit of faith, and to accustom them to walk in the light of truth. This is the first Lesson we must propose to them in this point, wherein we must keep and exercise them, as that which is onely profitable, and without which nothing is stable or true, not to entertain and amufe (I dare not fay, to deceive) them by fo much prudence; by the confideration of fo many humane reasons, and by the example and action of men; a hard cafe, that the devout of this age take fo much care to recommend and obtain morall and civil Vertues, and mention not, nor confider but superficially the divine and necessary. Let us learn and say with Jefus Christ, that Truth alone shall fave us, and that truth must be the foundation & establish ment of our life, if we will live true Christians.

Hence the foul, that will arrive to christian perfection, must thut her eares, divert her thoughts from all that the humane spirit, reason and self-love, can inwardly represent, and must not hearken to them who regard not God purely, but measure the greatness of Heaven with the eyes of flesh, by the small ness of the rorth, and speak of vervee and christian perfection, according to their own

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fense, more like Philosophers then Christians. Such persons by their discourse and conference study to destroy the maxims of Jefus Christ, to establish humane prudence, and use their attermost to abase vertue, and make it had mane. In a word, they onely labour to make man reasonable, not to make him a perfect christian. Upon such occasions, the foul that feeketh true perfection, and will follow Jefur Christ, must stand upon her guard, and avoid fuch persons, and with great care, must prevent bumane prudence from annihilating in her the fpirit of faith, and the esteem of the things of God. If it happen that a foul fee her felf among fuch persons, and shall understand their discourse to be such, it will be good at that instant, by a sweet elevation of pirit, to give her felf to God, and renew if the can, her efteem of Truth in a thought of God, renouncing the persivations of the bumane spirit, and protesting that she will receive no other conduct or light then that of Faith, nor other interiour dispositions then those of Jesus Christ, according to the truebs that he hath left to his Church.

If notwithstanding all this, the foul remain in fear, or trouble of spirit, or feel the spirit of faith to diminish in her, then she shall give her self more strongly to God, and recollecting her self, she shall with an humble spirit, stir up in

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the bottom of the heart, a confidence in God alone, and a diffidence of all things. In fine, the shall divert her self from all thoughts which trouble the repose of her spirit; and captivate her judgement, her reason, and humane effence to the spirit of faith; the shall undergo with an humble patience the pains which she feels, contenting her self by an act of her will to subject her spirit to all that Jefus hath faid, without regarding any other thing; and in this manner she shall keep her felf united with Jesus Christ, and in a secret filence shall imploy her self in him, not

about the business in question.

This all is heroick, because his disposition is hard, and strikes our fenses rudely, and fometimes it is painfull, but it is withall certain and pleasing to God. It is not painfull otherwise then as our reason, our judgement, and the leve of our own interests is living in us. If we would annihilate all that, it would be easie for to overcome, and to believe rather in Jesus Christ, then in men, and our own sense, yet & e in & must we not (whatsoever difficulty we meet with) neglect this labour; for as the fout hath nothing more affired then faith, nothing more profitable, or more powerfull then truth; so the Devil fails not also all the wayes that he can, to draw us from the conduct of faith, and to annihilate in us the light, and to force

cording

us from the adherence to truth, if not all at once, yet at least by little and little. The foul therefore must take heed, she be not here deceived, seeing all her happiness consists in walking in the spirit of faith, and with the light of the truth. This exercise is important; let us see how we are to behave our felves therein.

CHAP. VI.

Of the use of Fuith, and how we may practise it.

He foul may be guided two wayes, by the natural light of reason, which is weak and deceitful, ever fallible, and by the light of faith which is infallible, powerful, certain, proportioned to that flate of glory whereat we aim, it is a supernatural light given by God to guide us to Heaven. The first is common to the souls of the World, by St. Poul, stiled children of the flesh; the second proper to fouls, which live perfect christians, who refign themselves to the spirit of God; and to his conduct, who trust onely in God, adhere to nothing but to the faith which they have in the words of Jesus Christ, and the Maximo of the Gospel. It is the property of a obriftion to live and guide himfelf, according

cording to the light and truths of Faith, lights. much above the natural light of Reafon, to this end is he made a Christian. Tis true, the way of faith is hard, became it captivates the judgement, it is above our sense, it combates bumane reason, it is hidden, and very spirituall, yet must we, nevertheless, follow and embrace it, because Jesus Christ gives it, because it is certain and infallible, because it is fintable to the wayer of God, who leads men in this world through obscurity, having referred

knowledge and light for heaven. 1933 II

There are, who will think that the foul may be deceived by this way, our spirits being too feeble, this way too eminent, and that it occasions a perpetuall combate in the spirit! As it is trouble some to a man to walk in darkness, so it is bard for the foul to go this way of Faith, which is obscure and hidden. But if we would learn it well, we must say the contrary, all other wayer are uncertain, and deceitfull, vertue alone is infallible, we shall never be deceived, if we flick to it. It were to have a mean esteem of Gods grates, and to be ignerant of the Principles of our Salvation, to believe that the faith God hath given us to conduct us, is capable of loofing us. Let us remember that God hath given us the light of faith to guide our reason, and that our reason, must fubrie thereunto, and in respect of Faith

Faith, be annihilated, as Saint Paul faith, We neally by faith, not by fight: meaning, that to Cor. 5.7. live Christianly, we must let our reason be guided by faith, not faith by reason; where in we see the designes of God in the rule of our souls, the necessity of our walking by the light of this torch, or according to the ordinary manner of speech, see how necessary it is for him that will live a perfect Christian to

follow onely the light of faith, and to learn to make use of Evangelicall truth.

If at any time the fouls who take this may are deceived, it is in that they go out of it, and (being persmaded by the Devil, or felf-love, or the vanity of the humane spirit, which esteems it felf in every thing) withdraw themselves from the conduct of faith to follow that of bumane prudence, choosing to be guided by the rules of the flesh, and the spirit of worldly vanity, rather then by the maxims of Jefus Christ, and the spirit of heavenly truth. Thus indeed they find themselves deceived, and fall into misfortunes, not for having taken this way of faith, but for having quitted it, and adhered to humane prudence, and the light of reason, which like an ignis fatuus, will lead us out of the may, unless we be aided by a supernatural force, and guided by a more fure light, such as is this of faith. But to the foul that is faithfull, applying

Afairm of Christianity, that feeks God with simplicity and humility, there must necessarily arrive great profit and advantage in christian perfection. We must not therefore condemn this way, and reject it as too high, too difficult, and too painfult; for it is the way that the Some of God himself hath left to his Charch, and commanded all his children. But on the contrary, we must teach it every one, accommodating our selves to their several capacition, and giving them all the means to pursue it, without going out of it, least they be described. If we find here any difficulty, it is in our selves.

There are two things in man which himder his progress this way, one is esteem of himself, and of his own spirit; the other is the Love that he bears bimfelf, and, for his own fake, to the Creatures. To purfue this way, and to make use of Faith, he must go out of himself, and renounce his own spirit, and raise himself above all Creatures, to adhere to cruth, to believe and to make ne of what he did believe; he must renounce his judgement, his reason and his sense, and annihitate them. If our reason, sense, and judgement, replugne the much proposed to our belief, we mult quit our reasonand our sense, to unite our felves to the cruth. If, for instance, it is pro-2idT N 2

proposed, that the uncreated eternall word become man; that God died; reason and sense oppose this truth : Reason cannot comprehend that the eternall God should make himfelf subject to Time, the immortall submit himself to Death; yet to believe this, our Will moved by grace, notwithstanding the opposition of reason and sense, must say, I will believe and adhere to the truth proposed. The will adhering hereto commands reason and judgement, which obeying her, believe what she proposes; the understanding which nfeth to command and be free, renders it felf captive and abedient, annihilating its own thoughts and reason, that so it may adhere to the truth proposed, and form an att of Faith.

Thus we are to understand that of Saint Paul, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. By faith the understanding which useth to command, is made captive and obedient to the Will; therefore the soul in the practise of Faith, goes out of her selfe, and no more obeys her judgement or sense; she no more regards her self, but the truth onely, which she embraces as her object, adhering and uniting her self thereto. Thus by Faith, the soul is elevated above her self, to be tyed and united to the eternall and infallible truth revealed and proposed to her.

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This well confidered, will fhew us the excellency and dignity of faith, by which knowledge we shall learn how much we are to efreem the state of christianity in generall, and the life of a christian in particular, seeing, that according to Gods designes, and the grace of Jesus Christ, the christian as christian must live and be guided, onely by the spirit of truth and light of faith, which being divine and supernaturall, drawes us out of our selves, to unite and tye us to God who is truth. We shall moreover fee by what hath been faid, that faith is not what we think; it confifts not in great learning, in many reasons, and severall Arguments; on the contrary, it is for the simple, and for those who can go out of themselves, who can annihilate themselves in their reason, and quitting the regard of themselves and other creatures, adhere and follow the truth of faith. Therefore it is faid commonly, that the learned and wife of the world, who have most prudence, most reason, the most solid judgement and capacity of spirit, have likewise most opposition to faith, for they are lesse able to go out of themselves, to annihilate their own spirits and judgements. Thus Jefus Christ, after he had fummed up the truths of Heaven, and described the contentments of the glory of the just, concludes with an Enthusiasme of truth. Mat.11.25. I thank thee O Father, faith he, Lord of Heaven

and Earth, because thou has bid these things, (these truths) from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, to the hamble and meek. Which she we that the knowledge of truth, and of the spirit of faith, is a gift of God, that God gives it to the humble and little ones; that to adhere to it, we must humble and abase our selves. In a word, to make use of the truth and faith conceived, we must go out of our selves, and out of esteem of our selves. Let us practise this, for it is our principall design.

To make use of faith and truths conceived, we must first consider what faith proposes, but we must consider it barely and simply without any discourse upon it; we must adhere thereto, and having adhered to it, we must all and do all things in pursuit of this adherence. Let us propose an example in common things, to facilitate the practice. I look upon God, I consider his infinite esence ; I fee that in respect of his divine Majesty, all creatures are as nothing. Having taken and imprinted this thought in my fpirit, I believe, and immediately adhere thereunto, faying, it is true. Then making use of this truth which I believe, I defpife all that is not of God, and that belongs not to God, for the all of faith which I performed, teacheth me that all the rest is nothing, all creatures are nothing before God. In like manner, amidft my actions, making use of of the truth that I profess and believe, sometimes I despise one thing, sometimes another, esteeming God onely, but accounting all the rest as nothing. Thus I act in the spirit of Truth, and make use of Faith. Let us give an

example more common.

I would form in my felf the presence of God by the principles of Faith. Hereupon I will rouse up in my spirit the thought of that truth which reaches me God is present every when, and thence infer, that consequently he is in my heart, with the same greatness and Majesty char he is in Heaven, amidft the Cherubims and Saints, for it is the fame God. Having conceived this truth, I adhere to it, and fay it is true; then making use of it, I find my felf in the prefence of God, who is in my heart; I hold my felf before him in great reverence; I walk with recollection of spirit, and assweet application of my foul to God who is prefent. Now I look on him with love, next I adore him, doing all thefe actions by the principle of truth. This is to make ufe of Truth. The thing is not hard, we must onely apply our selves heartily hereunto. For according to the mensure that we advance and perfectionate our felves in this exercise, shall our actions be perfeet, and performed in the spirit of truth. This is a point of much importances I wish I could perswade all christians to it, for it is the foundation

effection God onely, ble a coul

dation of true plety, and the cause, root and source of all good actions.

CHAP. VII.

Of the effects that Faith produceth in our fouls, and of the esteem of God.

7 THen the Apostle faith, Faith is the substance of things hoped for, he would compare faith to fubstance, and fay, that as Substance is the Support of all Accidents, fo faith is the Support and basis of all Vertues and Graces. Faith is the first gift of beaven, and the eldest of the graces of God; she contains and fubstains all the vertues of Christianity, according to the faith in us, and the we we make thereof, are we vertuous, and advanced in Christian perfection. As this is the first of Gods gifts, fo the first care of a Christian must be to compass so fruitfull and profitable a grace. This is a talent whereof God will demand a most exact account, when we shall appear before the tribunall of his divine justice. God gives us not fo great a grace but to profit thereby, and make use of it. It belongs to God alone to give faith, to move our will, to illuminate our understanding; but it is in man to make use of it, and to shew by his works the the faith he hath received of God. In fine, what advantage is it to possess faith, which is an infused habit, and to let it sleep in us, to pos-(es truth, and to keep it under restraint? Faith, we fay, is a supernatural habit, a light of grace; we must therefore put it in action, and make use of this light to walk forward in the waves of grace and path of vertue. This is the defigne of God, evident in the mysteries of Chrifrianity s the eternall Father fent and gave us his Son, the uncreated and effentiall truth to freak to us, & conduct us in the spirit of truth; the Son conversed among men to bear wit- Jo. 18:37: neß, (as he himself faith) unto the truth; the fame Son of God ascending into heaven, sent to us the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, to enlighten us, and teach us the truth. And why hath God so great a care, that we should know the truth, but because the knowledge of that might fave us, and make us free s that is, that the light of the truth, which is the spirit of faith, might draw us from vice and fin, to lead and confirm us in the acquisition and possession of vertues. O boop out the holder

Look upon a foul, guided by the spirit of faith, you shall see that immediately she detestis ill, and embraceth good, it is the property of it to engender and form acts of vertue. If the foul knows the greatness of God, making use of the knowledge of this truth, she will present

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Faith

ly be carried to a great efteem of God. From this esteem springs reverence, reverence operates love, love brings the foul to God; the foul so united by love, fears to displease him; This fear, which is an effect of love, brings into the foul, a vigilancy not to offend him; the leveth, but it is to pleafe him in all things. This vigilancy forms a purity in the ford; this purity renders us worthy to peffest God. Thus faith fummons al the vertues, embraces them, and binds them all together, and as she is mother, so is the also nurse of them. In brief, the is the foundation of the Christian life, the now. rishment of all good ections: This is the meaning of Saint Paul, who faid, The just Shall live by faith s the reason is plain s Faith is a light of truth; he then that walks in the light of faith, walketh in the cruth; and to walk in truth, is to hate fin, which is a lyer. This is to live in the practice and poffesion of true vertue, and in the terms of the Scripture, to live in Jefus, who is the way, the truth, and Joh, 14, 6, the life. It therefore greatly importeth fouls which will live good Christians, and obtain true vertue, to establish themselves in the spirit and use of faith, to demand it of God, and to referre all their good exercises thereunto, which is truly the foundation of all the reft, the principle, the entertainer and Supporter of Christian perfection; this exercise is very large.

Heb.10. 38.

Joh. II. 36.

Fuith and truth have effetts almost incume. rable; He who applies himself thereto, shall tafte the fruits more or lefs, according to his care therein. But if we would know the most important where we must begin, I anfwer, it is the esteem of God, wherein the foul must entertain it felf much, and lay a good foundation to arrive at this esteem. It is not necessary to enter into a high and extraordinary knowledge of God, but to make use of the Principles of faith, and a frequent loving and affectionate consideration of God; we must never speake of God, or of any thing that concerns him, but in words worthy of the fubject, with a fenfe full of respect and reverence, when we speak or think of the things of beaven, we must believe they are ineffable; far above all that we can think or speak; We must not make fmall account of what concerns God, but on the contrary, we must have from the bottom of our fouls, a great esteem and belief of all that God hath done, of all he hath faid, and of that which he hath left to his Church. In God there is nothing tittle; God is as adorable and estimable in the least, as in the greatest. Finally, it is very profitable and necessary to the foul that giveth it felf to this exercise, to draw from all things, and upon every fibjed an esteem of God, and to form in heart, solid and serious thoughts

thoughts thereof. To assist us in this practice, and to advance us in this vertue, we ordinarily make use of reading, prayer, and meditation. But it is good to take heed how we are guided in this exercise of prayer; how we make use of the thoughts, the light and knowledge we receive herein. Many seeking only their own satisfaction in it, do nothing but busie their own spirit; they seek and aim at nothing but relishes and resentments; they leap from one subject to another; they run from the sirst point to the second, and apply themselves sometimes to one affection, sometimes to another, spending the whole time in a multiplicity and disturbance of thoughts.

Part III.

To profit herein, we must proceed otherwife; for in these exercises, and all other, we must onely feek to know the will of God, to esteem it, and to make our selves worthy the graces necessary to accomplish his will, and to please his divine Majesty; and having put our selves in the presence of God, by the Principle of faith, we must lay hold upon truth, we must rest therein nakedly and simply, we must adhere thereunto, and keep our felves firm in this first view, with care quietly to leave our spirits to be replenished of God, and bathing our felves, as it were in this thought, we must unite our selves to this knowledge, imprinting by degrees in our hearts, the light, ftrength,

frength, and knowledge of the proposed truth; whether the knowledge be great on little, we must always keep our heart and spirit open and free to receive the thoughts thereof. These will put us into an esteem of God; by this esteem, we shall easily be carried to an humble respect and desire to serve and love so bigh a Majesty; and we need not doubt, but that many things will be done in the foul by Christ, if the dispose her felf thereto as the ought; if the leave her felf to be guided by his spirit, and abandon her self to all the effects of grace, attending them with an bumble patience. But, Oh the misfortune of our felf-love! the foul feeking her felf, and her own fatisfaction, withdrawes and separates her felf from God, to follow her own inclinations, to content her fense, and to employ her felf in what she pleases, making her felf hereby unworthy to feel the grace of the presence of God, and to bear the effects to God and their ever to the light to durt fo

It were easie to deduce all into particulars, if it were necessary; but not to trouble my self with all the failings that happen in this exercise, it suffices, that I say, that the sirst study of the soul must be to know God according to the lights and truths of faith, to adhere strongly to this knowledge, to enter into an esteem of his greatness, and then to have

nour and adore him with an honour worthy of God. These words express much, and include the first duties of the soul, and shew wherein she must employ her self with care

before all things.

Hence we may learn, that their pradife is not good; who as foon as they enter into fome knowledge and often of God, and receive some light in the confideration of the withs of faith, whereby they feel themselves moved, and as it were drawn by an humble refood and inward reverence before God, inflead of staying and receiving at leifure this little rouch, this fweet beam of Heaven, following this little interiour light, and annibitating themselves before the supreme Majesty of God, they retire from founder pretence of a falle humility, to apply themfelves to other thoughts, and fearing evill on purpole to lose time and be deceived, or to lose themselves in their estate, they shut the eare to God, and their eyes to the light, to entertain themselves in their own conceptions and imafinations, and in the confideration of them. felver. We fee by experience that this way is ill, we may easily observe, that such fouls never advance, or if there appear some advancement, it is but in appearance, belides that, it is alwayes in fear, and in a spirit of felf-love, never in folid vertue; the reafon is manifest

manifest. If prayer be an elevation and union of our heart, a speaking of the soul to God, it is hard to conceive how we may advise to quit this application of the soul to God, to torment her imagination, and cast her into the consideration of exteriour things, into the examination of divers circumstances, into a continual regard of what we are, and

what we ought to be?

But wherefore all this, seeing it pertains to the matter of prayer? let us leave it to them who treat thereof, and content our selves to conclude with that which me would perswade that the first thing that he must practise, who will live a perfect christian, is to live in the spirit, and to malk in the light of faith, and by this light to enter into an extremos God, which is supported upon the knowledge of his greatness, and of what he is. What course we must take to obtain this knowledge, we will proceed to speak of in the subject of Humility.

Gods Houtes the home layes up, and keeps fale the divine pages. Paul by wey of excellency, calls her the vertue of felius: for befoles that this versus appertains to him, more then to any and that the whole course of his fale and the myllaries of his fufferings were ever accomplished in himility; it is more over his verius in that the published it, and reover his verius in that he published it, and re-

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The Second Disposition.

CHAP. VIII.

of Humility, and the meanes to obtain it?

He design of this Discourse is to draw to the life, the Picture of a true Christian, describing one after another, not all the vertues, but those onely which are most necesfary, and the bases and foundations of Christiamity, the Mothers and Nurfes of the reft. Faith leads the way, humility followeth, for, as much as we know and esteem of God, so far are we humble. Faith makes us know God, humility leads us to God; Faith disposes us, and hews us true vertues , bumility acquires them, and being acquired conferous them. This is fire that opens and makes plain the way to charity, and who is as it were the Miffris of Gods House; she alone layes up, and keeps safe the divine gifts. St. Paul by way of excellency, calls her the vertue of Jesus; for befides that, this vertue appertains to him, more then to any, and that the whole course of his life, and the mysteries of his sufferings were ever accomplish'd in bumility; it is moreover his vertue in that he publish'd it, and recommended commended it to the world, and wills that his humility be the object and example of the life of men: Learn of me, faith he, for I am Mat. 11.29 meek and lowly of heart. It is he that hath, thundred and pronounced this fentence : Mat. 23.13 Whofvever Shall exalt himfelf, shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted; naturall and powerfull words pronounced by the mouth of Truth. Why should we seek further evidence; how acceptable this is to God, and how he rewardeth this truth, and how necessary it is for him that will be a perfect Christian? Let us no further demurre upon this subject, but examine wherein it confifts; let us learn what humility is, that is it we are most ignorant of.

Humility is truth; to be humble, is to walk in the fpirit of truth. I fay, bumility is truth, because true humility consists in this, than God by his infinite bounty, by his operations, of love and grace infuses into the foul, a light which makes it fee the truth in all things, more or less, as it pleases God. This light, which brings with it knowledge, abafeth & anmilitateth the foul in her felt, and causes that in all things she annihilate her felf, because this truth teacheth her what God is, and what the creature is; fo that this grace, which I call the light of truth, gives not onely knowledge, but

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but also actually annibilates the foul, and detains her in her lownes, in her nothing; and being in her nothing, the is truly where the ought to be; for hereby the is in the truth, and acting in this flate, the walks in the first of truth, which is the same, as to act with humility. Many will wonder hereat, who thinking they have humility, have it not, who thinking to attain it by certain exercises of humiliation, do but deceive themselves; not but that their exercises are good, and conduce to humility, but if we pass no further, if we posfeß not the spirit of truth, acting by the same firit, which is the firit of God, and of simplicity, we may make many acts of bumility, but we shall not have bumility; for bumility, in its formality and effence, confifteth in the spirit of truth and simplicity; the spirit of truth and simplicity is God. To be humble then, we must act in this spirit : I will explicate, and make this more intelligible.

Humility is a supernatural light, which I call the light of truth, because it maketh us know things as they are. On one fide it drawes and advances us to the knowledge of the infinite goodness of God, and other his divine perfections; and by this knowledge, forms in us an esteem of the supreme Majesty of God; On the other fide, the fame light causes us to fee what we are, our own meannes, unworthiness, impotency, indigence, the truth of our nothing, and by consequence, before God, she makes us see the truth, which consistes in the knowledge of God and of our selver. This truth so conceived, possessing our spirit, and and acting in our soul, annihilates and debases us in all things, in all our actions, with so much facility, that the soul can do no otherwise; for she cannot but act according to her knowledge; so that acting wholly according to this light, and taking all things as she tonceives them, she walks in humility, and, as we say, humbles her self, and in effect, she doth humble her self, not knowing it; for she hath no eyes but to see the truth, no power, but to act according to truth.

I call here bumility, a light, and a light of truth, for so in effect she is; whence it follows, that by bumility, we arrive to the knowledge of truth, as by the light of the Sun we see the Sun; so by the light of the truth, wherein consists humility, we see truth. Thus we understand it; when we say that God revealeth his divine secrets and greatness, and teacheth the truths to humble souls. Thou hast Mat. 11; hid these things from the wise and prudent; and hast revealed them unto babes, that is, to the humble, saith Jesus Christ, to his Father.

Whence we infer, that to understand the Catholique and supernatural truths, and to pos-

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Ifa. 57.15:

fest them, we must go to them with humility, not sufficiency, nor capacity, much less curiosity; God is pleased with little ones; so much reading, so much curiosity, so many Questions, so many Reasons, wherein men take pains, are unprositable labours; and rather separate us from Christian truth, then bring us neerer to it; for God dwels with the humble spirit, saith the Oracle of heaven; so that retyring our

the Oracle of heaven; so that retyring our selves from the truth, is to make us uncapable of humility, and without humility, we cannot come to heaven; whence we may imagine what danger the spirits of this Age run into.

Further, we may learn from what hath been faid, that they who will acquire Christian humility, must not stop at exteriour actions of meanness and humiliations, nor at words of confusion and abasement, nor at fome fabmissions, and accommodations, although they be frequent and profitable; but we must pass further, and penetrate the centre of the spirit, there to establish the throne of truth, and to make our heart the treasury of the light of God. To be humble, we must endayour to know the truth; we must possess it, we must all by the Principle of truth; which being done, it will be easie to come to the exteriour, and to produce infinite acts of humility and annihilation; for we cannot have bumility, without doing all these actions; but

but a man may do all these assign without without with a man having humility. But we must now know how we may acquire the knowledge of trait many acquire where where of its common and easie where of its common and ea

and application affilted by grace, without which nothing. Xal backets We arrive to

of the knowledge of God and our felves.

He knowledge of truth confilts in knowing God and our felues ; a man may arrive at this knowledge two wayes, by infusion, by acquisition. The first comes from God alone, who communicates and infufes into our foul a light springing from truth which we call the spirit and light of faith. This light brings and gives the knowledge of God and of our felves; and this knowledge as well as the light, is an operation of God, who by this divine light which he spreads in us, annihilates our foul, and in all things detains it wholly in this annihilation, wherein confifts humility: Thus is bumility a grace infused, and a pure operation of God alone; this operation is greater or leffer, according as God pleases, who by the communication of this divine light, confummateth and annihilateth the foul more or less, as he pleafes, for his glory. This first manner is for few persons, because few are advanced to this way, few render themselves worthy of fuch grace,

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The fecend, and more ordinary is acquired) We propose divers means to acquire the knowledge of God, and of our felves the most common and easie whereof, is consideration and application affifted by grace, without which nothing can be done. We arrive to the knowledge of God, not by sublime penetration of the Attributes of Divinity, that is not necessary, and few are capable of it, but by faith. When the four confiders God as he is fimple, proposed in the creed to us, according to the bare and fimple fignification of the words, as all good, all wife, all mighty, this manher is sufficient. Therefore we must accufrom our felves to make use of that which Faith propoles, and after excite in our selves the thought of God, and entertain our felves therein, not by fresulation, but by obedience and affection which is that we call an affective thought of God, as if we should fay in our hearts; yearny God, thou art wholly wife, and wholly good, I will leave my felf to thy conduct, I will submit my self to thy divine will. By these frequent thoughts of God, the foul unites it felf to God, adheres to his truths, and by little and little, ascends to the knowledge of God. This manner is not hard, neither requires it any rule, we must onely be vigilant often to apply our felves thereto, when any thing gives occasion thereof. To arrive to the knowledge

ledge of our selves, it suffices not, to consider our own impotency, our feebleness and our imperfections, we fee them, and know them but too much, we make a custom of it, and this truth will never lead us to hamility, but we must elevate our thoughts, and make use of the knowledge of God, thus. The foul must prefent it felf before God, and having conceived as well as the can the infinite being, and foveraign Majesty of the Divinity before which the is, the regards him, the adores him; then the begins to compare her being with that of God, the entertains her felf in this thought, and in this repard, and presently acknowledging the exaltation of the divine essence above her own, she accounts her self as if she were not, by reason of the infinite distance the fees betwixt God and her, and in this view the regards her felf, rather in a not being, and a nothing then in a being. The foul filling her felf with this thought, and pofferfed with this truth, humbles her felf in the knowledge of her nothing, and abases her self as much as the can. For having conceived the greatness of God throughout, she sees that the is a meer nothing. This truth annihilates all creatures, yea the most perfect upon earth, and the Saints in Heaven, forc'd by this principle, humble themselves, and make themselves as nothing, before the supreme and fac

incomprehensible Majesty of God, in respect of whom all creatures together, are not formuch as one grain of Sand! The foul in the fight of this truth, mint fay in her felf: If all crea-La 40 15 tures are nothing before God, what am I who am the least? And if I am nothing before God, can I make my felf any thing? If before the Creator, I find not my felf, by reason I am so much plung dinto nothing, would I to the prejudice of truth, appear to be something before the Creature? In the confideration of this truth, the spirit is vanquished; the foul knowes what she is, and is constrained to humble her felf. We must paffe farther, and enter into the confideration of the totall and absolute dependance wherein the foul is in regard of God, a dependance fo great, that she holds onely of God, the fublifteth not, nor moveth but in God, with fo much necessity, that the beames subfift not by," nor depend more on the Sun, then the foul doth on her God: O happy dependance, which gives us God, and binds us to God ! In confidering this truth, the foul finds that the is nothing, and that the hath nothing, either in the order of the effence credted, or in the order of grace; for all is in God, and depend on God in fuch manner, that if God should wholly withdraw himself, she should leave to be that which she is, and should find her felf in her nothing. So that if the have any thing, the fees that it is in God, novin her felf in him faith St. Paul, we live and move, and have our being. Reflecting here Ads 17. apon, the faith in her heart, If all that I have 28. belong not to me, nor is of me, but of God, and belongs to God, then am I nothing, nor have any thing. Wherefore do I flatter my felf, and believe my felf to be jomething, when in truth I am nothing? why do I glorifie my felf, and please my felf in that which belongs not to me? wherefore should I attribute to my felf, the honour, contentment and glory, which belongs onely to my Lord? No no, I will keep in my meannefs, I will hide my felf in the abyffe of my nothing, and if God be merciful unto me, and out of his bounty give me fomething, I will hold it of him, I will onely keep it for him, and I refolve from this time, and to all eternity, I will live in the dependance that I owne,

Let us not stay here, but advance forward to the light of truth, and let us cast our eyes upon the need we have of God, and we shall find what we are, and that we are nothing, nor have nothing, as liaving received all of God, and we possess mothing, either temporall or spirituall, in nature or in grace, but onely that which God reserves; and if he should be pleased to withdraw his gifts, or cease to preserve them, we should find our selves like Adam, maked and poor, and should return to our nothing.

Let us behold our felves then fo naked and develled, and let us paule upon this thought, and upon this confideration, and we shall be ashamed to look upon our selves, and we shall be forced, whether we will or not, to humble our felves, but with a bumility full of love and confidence, which shall make us lift up our eyes to Heaven, to behold him on whom we so absolutely depend from whose hands we have received all, and must yet every moment receive influence, conduct, grace, and stability, and that so necessarily, that if we happen to separate our felves from him, and if he but stop his assistance and his concourse, leaving us to our selves, we assuredly shall fall, and in an instant lose all, in what state soever we are of Sandity and grace. O most powerful Truth, to bumble us if confidered; a truth that humbles the most boly and just upon earth, and which annihilates the Angels and Seraphines in Heaven, a truth which makes the glorious firits, Angels and Saints who enjoy God, to agknowledge that they have nothing but of the mercy of God, and that they have no flability but in God; an acknowledgement fo ftrong, that it were able to pluck them, and unite them to him indiffolubly, if otherwise they were not ty'd to him by the state of plory.

This is the very state of a foul of Jefus, who

who knowing the greatness of God, and see. ing himself his Cdeature penetrating those truths by a light foringing from the perfonall union of the word, a light worthy of the dary of the Some of God, humbles it felf but with a burnility that shall be eternall, a humility more profound then that of all the Saints and Angels, a humility which alone is worthy to be and adore the infinite Efsence, and the supreme Majesty of God. So that these truths annihilating all the spirits, and humbling all the Seraphims, nothing but man thuts his eyes against so great a light. Jesus Christ and these Seraphims, humble themselves in the throne of their glory, and menglorifie themselves sitting on the Dungbill of their vices. O hardness and obstinacy of humane spirits ! Othe power of the blind ambition of men, who see and confess these triubs, who bear the marks of them, who feel the violence of them, yet remain infensible, eniumph in their wickedness, and refuse to act by love and vertue , what they shall be constrained to do by Justice and rigour, for those who extalt themselves shall be bumbled, but bumbled by the repengefull hand of Almighty God. Let us open our eyes and acknowledge; let us descend into our selves, and from the bottom of our nothing, cry to God that he would give us that light of truth. Let us adore this truth of Jefus Christ, and let us relign our selves over to his power, and invoke the force and spirit of his humility, that it may consume in us the vanity and ambition of the spirit of Adam that lives in us, and communicate to us so necessary a vertue.

The third Disposition . vibrow

mid CHARL X.

Of an effectuall desire to be GOD'S.

S the spirit of Faith is great in us, fo let Aus make use thereof, and esteem God according to the same proportion, and enter into this Disposition, absolutely necessary to all fouls who go the wayes of grace, and abandon themselves wholly to our Lord. This Disposition is a pure and perfect desire to belong to God ar any price whatfoever, and to be his purely without any other regard then of the greatness and soveraign Majesty of God, who deferves to be loved, ferved and adored, because he is God, and shutting the eye to all considerations, to all hopes and all profit, we must say and bear in heart this truth; I will be Gods for his own fake. This defire will not be so difficult as it appeares, if faith be living

in us, and if we bear a true esteem of God. But we must proceed further, this defire must not be in the mouth onely, but in the heart; to be pure, it must regard nothing but God, to be perfect, it must be infinite without limitation or restriction, as if we should say, I will be Gods in all that he wills, and in fign of the perfection whereinto I desire to enter, I will know nothing of all that he defireth of me, I content my felf to be in a bare abandoning of my felf to all the thoughts, all the defignes, all the Counsels he hath formed of me in the Cabinet of his eternall wisdom, to all the thoughts Jesus Christ had of me on the Altar of his Crosse, facrificing himself to the glory of his Father, and offering with himself the fouls of his Elect. I offer my felf to him to be all that he will, and to leave all the effects of his divine pleasure, be it of Justice or of love of abandoning or enjoying, of abundance or privation, of fervour or of drought. In brief, I will have no other defire but to be Gods, to be all that be will, that I should be.

This is the adorable estate into which the soul of Jesus Christ entred the first instant of the Mystery of the Incarnation, as soon as it was united to the Word, for in the same moment his soul produced an act of obligation of him to be wholly Gods, wholly obedient to his divine decrees in all the wayes which he ordained

ordained upon him, and upon his life, in the wayes of bumiliation, of sufferings, of privation, cross and death. This is also the estate and first disposition whereinto the soul must enter that seeks God, and will live Christianly; but she must remain herein with such stability and constancy, that she may render her self immutable, in regard of his disposition: For in whatsoever change she finds her self, she must never quit this disposition; on the contrary, it is herein that she must establish and settle her self more and more, and all her care must be, to bear it, not in her mouth, nor in her will, but in the bottom of her beart, and centre of her soul.

We have faid, that this defire to be God's, must be pure, simple, naked, and absolute; therefore, to forme this desire and make it perfect, we must not receive into our spirit, any reason, any consideration, any interest, but onely say, and say it truly, I will be Gods for Gods sake, according as God will have me, and in such

manner as shall please him.

This Disposition thus explained, teaches us, that they who seek Christian perfection, and faithfully resign themselves to Jesus Christ, to live in the state that pleaseth him, must not desire to know or understand what God will do with them, nor what he will say to all the motions which they think, or in all that they

understand,

understand, nor in all the diverse estates spirituall or temporall, wherein they find themselves; (that is, neither necessary, nor prosetable) on the contrary, to desire to know and understand all that passeth, and examine whence it comes, and whither it tends; this were to draw her self out of resignation, and to go out of the purity of this Disposition, it is onely necessary that the soul have a great vigilancy to receive all of God, and to receive it in the manner that God requires of her, and to bear it with the spirit as he will, and to make use of it with the purity that it merits. In this point consists the sidelity of the soul, and the perfection of this estate.

To facilitate this, it is good for the foul to present her self often before God, exciting in her self an efficacious desire to do the pure will of God, and to do it in the disposition and manner that he requires, without knowing what he will, and she shall often of-

fer her felf to God for this end.

Moreover, it is very profitable to offer our felves to God, and to form a generall will to practife all forts of good, though we have no light nor feeling, contenting our felves with a resignation to God, and taking care to follow him, and to co-operate faithfully with the graces and motions we receive from him. It is a Maxime in Piety, that the soul must

not feek any fenfe, any light, nothing of particular, but keep and conferve it felf in a pure. estate to be Gods, to do his divine will, and to render her self faithfull to his graces, remembering, that we have nothing to do in this world, but to submit to the will of God, to receive his gifts, and to render them again to go one of the turn vot this bee mid onu

The fourth Disposition.

onely necessary that the ford have a creat

CHAP. XI.

Of the Purity of the Heart.

TE proceed in our designe of drawing the picture of a perfect Christian, which confifts in representing the principal vertues wherewith he must be invested, and the difpositions wherein he must be to become fit to bear God, and to live onely upon the spirit and grace of God, as in the Church he is fed with the body, and drinks the blood of Jefus Christ. Among the true vertus, which we must posess, that which is as the gold, and enamel of all the rest, is purity, a vertue altogether necesfary, yet either despised, or little known. If we would fee the necessity thereof, let us onely onely confider what is the end of a Christin an and wherein confifts the perfection of the fate of Christianity. The perfect Christian must live the life of grace, which is the life of Jefus Christ, he must carry God, he must possess God: If any man love me, faith Christ, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come into him, and make our abode with bin; which we must not onely understand of justifying, and inherent grace, a gift created and given of God, but of the reall true babitation and presence of God in our souls. The foul of the just, faith the Wife man, is the Throne of God; and the Apolle sayes often, that our souls and bodies are Temples of God: I Cor. 6, Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the boly Gooft?

Reflecting on this so manifest a truth, we must say, that to receive and possess God in our soul, we must have the purity of God; and in a word, without stattering our selves with vain hopes, and disguizing or covering the truth, let us consider a little seriously what the place ought to be where the Majesty of a God will dwell for ever; what ought his dwelling to be of whom David saith, Thou dwelst in the sanctuary, and in the hely of bolies? Pial, i.i. What ought the heart of a man to be where

God hath made himself a feat which he hath chosen and consecrated to be the throne of

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his

his love? We must believe God will require in us a purity worthy of God, feeing he who is purity it felf, will dwell eternally in us. This purity that God demands, and whereof he is worthy is fo divine, that our frength cannot arrive unto it, he must give it, he must affilt our importance; there is nothing but the fire of his love, the lightning of his light, the force of his grace, and the power of his frit that can purge, expiate, and confume all in us that is contrary to this purity. In brief, it belongs to God alone to place us in the purity that he requires of us: This shews how much those foods are deceived, who think to poffer God, and be well with bim, yet are more remote from him then heaven is from earth. We need not but to behold and judge by the effects, what its cause is. Now, as this purity is altogether necessary to possess God, foit is our part to defire and to demand it of him, and our principall care must be to purify our heart, to make it to bear God, we must offer it to him, that we may bring to our selves the effect of this saying of God to his Spanse, and to all others; My fon, give me thy beart, we must give and resigne it to him alone, it is his defire, it is our duty, and our happines, if he will vouchfafe to accept it, it will be his when he pleaseth to make it such as he requires it. This is not all, we must co-operate herein, and labour

Prov.23.

been with care and vigilities, that we may employ due selves herein with courage, and late been with profession the us therefore for wherein this purity considers at 11. bod or pailed only

The purity of the beart may be under food too water; one, that we must purthe our heart from all forts of few, and voluntaty imperfedime. God anters not into a malicious feed, nor inhabits in a body enflav d to for we mean, not only grafs fine, but ordinary failings, even all fants, be they never to little . For God being purity it felt, can not inhabit in a heart, if he find not, or put not therein this purity; and being infinitely good be infinitly hates wil, whathever it be and though the least faults drive not God out of our fault yes they make a division and unfettle the feet from God, they make great frail in the beart, they undermine it, they brand its they indiffer it's and being to, it is defagreeable to God, and becomes the abject of his Justice. The foul that knowes how to feer of God, and bears any impression of his purity, will think more then I fay, and never confert to the least imperfection, all is injutportable to her that the knows to be difact repeable to God, the hath no confideration of offere down, her own good; or of men where the fees there is any thing papable to offend the open and beart of her God; all her

care is to detell and extirpate, not onely the. least funts, but to quit, remante and separate her felf from whatfoever the knowes to be displeasing to God. It is the chief advice of St. Augustine; Before any work, saith he, be fure to purify the heart, and take from it all that you observe displeasing to God. When he would have us take from our hearts all that is displeasing to God, he discovers a great ferrer he would have us go out of our felves, and take out of us all that is of Adam, he would have us ampibilate our inclinations, because whatfoever is of Adam, contrary to fain, whence we conclude, that he who would possess Jesus, must do all he can possible to disposses himself of, and to drive away Adam, this forth of Adam, and his inclinations can no more fubfift in the foul with the spirit of God, then the Idol Dayon could fland before the Ark of the Covenant. All that is in us, and is not of God is impure and unworthy of God, and all that is out of God, can produce no good, nor any thing worthy of God; these are great truths, such as might transport our spirits, yet let us not be aftonish'd at this Proposition as too high and impossible, and we shall see that therein is nothing too much, but rather far less then so worthy a Subject

fubjed merits, if we confider how pure that foul must be that would please God, be in God, and possess God, and what purity it must have to be one with God, for thereon the life of a Christian happily terminates. O great God, how many deceive themselves! O God of adorable purity, how sew are sit

to posses Thee!

By the light of these truths we may discover the abuse and deceits in christian devotion. Some think that they hold God by the hand already, and believe themselves well advanced in perfection, in that they communicate, in that they fast and pray every day, and a thousand such like things, wherein they exercise themselves, they have the taste and sense of devotion, they speak well of God, and if you will believe them, they say they are ravished in God. But consider them well, you shall find they live wholly according to their own inclinations, they mind onely their own Interest, they care onely to fatisfie themfelves, in a word, they are but themselves, and full of felf-lave, you shall know these Trees by their fruits, and the end will let you fee, that do but touch these Mountains, and nothing will come out but smoke. God dwells not with Baal; let us not go two mayes, the foul who will poffe fi God, who is purity, must be pure, must purge and take from it felf, all that thev

that dipleuses God, for stess and blood postess,

There is another deteit whereto we must take heed, which is of those that believe they do much, and think that God is endebted to them, when their Constitute troubles them not with any deadly fin, that is, when they themselves say they avoid them all for that, according to the truth of this proposition fimply taken, it is certain, he who dies without mortall fin, shall be a Saint. But laying ande many things that may be faid against this abuse, I will onely make it appeare, that they Support themselves upon a Reed, for I advile all those fouls that speak so, to acquaint themselves with their own state, because that to know the flate of our Consciences and our faults as they are, we must know what they are before God, and by the light of God. We cannot have this knowledge, but in as much as we are filled with the light of truth, and as we effect God and his greatness: But if we did eftern God, and acknowledge his greatness, and if we did live in the light of the truth, we would never speak thus. On the contrary, we should not onely from mortall fin, but even the least faults, for knowing God, and esteeming his greatness, we love him, loving him, we fear to do any thing that may displease him, be it never so trivial, and they

they therefore who onely regard and fear the groffeft fine, and care not for the reft, affuredly, neither know nor esteem God. They kum him not, for they cannot know the frate of their Consciences, and consequently, they deceive themselves when they ground their assurance on a pretence that they are not troubled with mortall fins, and that so much the more in that they care not for all the rest, believing they are well afford of their falvation. Alass, who is he that can be affured he is worthy of love or hate? what presumption is it in men of this age, to affire themselves amidft fo many dangers? Saint Paul, the mirrour of Sandity faid of himself, I know nothing by my felf, yet I am not hereby justified; and elsewhere he sayes, that he runs and la- 1 Cor. 4. 4 bours alwayes, because he is not arrived to that perfection God requires of him. We must fay Phil. 3 12. the same in what state soever we are. Whence I conclude, that to live in the purity that God requires of a Christian, he must not onely som all fin, but further have a generall care and particular vigilance to do nothing, which may diffleute God, what soever it be, and must neglect nothing conducing thereto; and herein confifteth purity in the first fenfe.

Purity taken in the second manner, implies no other thing then a pure regard of P 4 man

man to God, be it for the feel or for the body. This purity is greatly important, and altogether necessary to those who would live as perfect Christians, by this purity, the foul regards onely God, the doth nothing but in the fight of God, she seeks nothing but his Will, if the love, it is onely God, if the affect any thing elfe, it is onely for God, and according to God, in every thing she seeks his glory and (atisfaction, all creatures are before her, as if they were not; in this confifts the essence of this vertue. Perhaps we shall make. it better known by proposing the wayes and meanes, whereby we may arrive to the acquifition of so divine a vertue.

The first I place in purity and simplicity of intention, when the foul in all that the does, annihilates all her intentions, her defires, her motions, her thoughts, and admits none but the pure desire of complying with God. I call this intention simple, because it must be clear and naked, without consulting Reason in any thing. This intention is simple, because it is one wholly, and alwayes equal in all things, it regards God onely, and him continually; in brief, this intention and regard is fimple, because it onely rests upon God; the foul that feeks this vertue, feeks onely God. O how defirable is this vertue! how happy is this manner of life! This, is that which unites

Gold, and is fit to bear God, what which pleafeth

The second meanes to arrive at the pos fession of this vertue is, by denying our selves. when we renounce our felves, and admit no resement that beares imputity and respect to our selves or the creature, as the esteem of our own merit, of our capacity, of our vocation, the content of a Neighbour, the profit of Friends, the acquisition of Vertue and such other things that cause us to stray from God. We must annihilate all these resemments and thoughts to perfift in the unity and bare fimplicity of the pure regard of God; the pleafure of God, his glory and his content is a thing more important, and infinitely of more worth then can be imagin'd, yea, then the falvation of all men. The foul therefore that feeks God and perfection (for that is all one) must carefully take heed to this manner of purity, for to regard any thing but God, and to love out of God, is to love unworthily, and to love any other thing with God whatfoever it be, to think thereon, to feek it, and to care for it, is to make too little account of God, it is to esteem his love too meanly. Men addicted to this World, will paffe over this lightly, and perhaps with contempt, but I wish all that heartily feek God, and are in the number of those whom God holds in his bend, and rewhich gards

gards to all eternity with a regard of love and good will, that they think of what worth this eternall regard of God is, who regards us without ceafing, that they confider what God deferves, and demand of God that which he pleafes for this regard of his love; I am confident that these thoughts would

lead them to true piety.

The third meanes to attain this Vertue, is vigilancy, whereby we take heed to that which God does in us, to correspond faithfully with the designes he hath to purifie us, for by this vertue he is infused, and God by his operations incessantly purifies us. It is the duty of the foul, to watch the occasions that God giveth her, I say to match, for the love of our felves is very cunning to separate us from God, and to apply us to our fenfes, under pretence of vertue and necessity. The devout foul must feriously take heed, least she destroy in her felf the works of God. This is the defign of Satan, they are his ordinary fubtleties that deceive the most fervent, by this meanes, defroying in them all that God intended. It requires a very quick fight to perceive these fuares, and a great vigilancy to correspond with the work of God, and to act with the purity of God, for to this point it must arrive. To this end will contribute much the fecond means we have proposed, which

which makes us renounce our felves, and annibiline in me all regard to the Creatures, that God alone may be the object, the hope, the con-

fidence, and the whole of our foul.

The brightness and beauty of this vertue, will hurt their eyes, who too much love themselves, for they must quir all to possess it, they must have neither heart nor eyes for themselves or the creatures, and this they cannordigest, who esteem themselves perfect enough, and think they hold God inchain'd by the chains of their devotions, which they love even to idolatry, despising and neglecting this vertue which gives us God, out of an opinion that they already possess him. The floathful will not regard it, because it exacts two much care and vigilance, it is for them who love God, or who feriously defire to love him, to efteem this vertue, and to feek it fervently; for where love is, there the eyes are, and we defire not to please but where we love. Let us love, and me thall find nothing difficult. Is it not an intolerable blindness, to see so many refusalls as we make to so great a bappiness, and to make difficulties, when God will love our fouls, when he will replenish them with himself. He will provide for them, he will conduct them, therefore he will separate them from themselves and the Creatures, that the heart may be pure, and fit fit to receive him who is purity it felf? O foul! saith Saint Cyprian, If thou suffice God, let God suffice thee, if God love thee, love thou him, if he regard thee, do thou regard him.

The fifth Disposition.

THE VOICE OF LAP. XII.

Of Self-deniall, and the necessity thereof.

I'T is impossible to be perfect, if we be not God's; we cannot be God's unless he possess us and replenish us with his spirit. To attain this happiness, we must necessarily go out of our selves, and into a true denial of our selves; for as much as we are emptied of our selves and the creature, so much shall we be filled of God, from whence this maxime so remarkable in Christian piety, Abnegation, and annihilation leads us to the fulness of God.

This vertue is almost unknown to the world, and which is to be lamented, even those that make it their business to follow Piety, regard it not, and yet there is no vertue more indispensable, or more necessary. Self-deniall is the first Disposition whereto the creature must put himself before the Majesty of his Creator, it is an estate which the soul must be in, if it will turn to God. In brief, it is the centre of Christianity;

Christianity: for it is founded upon a true and pure annihilation. We know the creatures before the Majesty of God, are but as a grain of sand; The Universe is but as a drop of morning dews and according to the saying of a Hos. 13.3. Christian Philosopher. The whole earth is but as a point of a point. None but God can say, I am that I am. All creatures ought to annihite themselves at his word, and to account 14. themselves before this infinite being, as if they were not.

The first use hereof was made by the Angels, when in the revolt that was in heaven, Saint Michael the Archangel, and all good Angels, according to their davies, re-doubled this Protestation of annihilation, Who is like wite God A words that made the Angels go out of themfelves, and annibilate themfelves before the Majefly of God; words thewing that felf-denial and annihilation is the first duty the Angels rendred to God. It is likewife the first thing that man ought to do, and the first use of his foul is to annihilate her self before the Majesty of God, and to prorest he will go out of his being; and renounce himfelf into be what God will have him The Reverence and Religion which men have professed, thew this annihilation of the creature before God; for from the beginning of the World by an instinct inspired from heaven, 90

beaven, Altars have been erelled, Sacrifices and Holocaustir offered, wherein the being of the thing farrificed is annibilated as in protesta tion made by the creature, that its being in dependant on God, and that he ought to dimibilate himself at fight of the incomprehenfible and adorable Majefty of his Creator. What difficulty can there be in a thing fo evia dent? Can there be any creature or fident fo ambitions, as to advance it felf before God, and efteem it felf something before his infinite being? If then before God, man may not efteem himself any thing without losing himfelf with Lucifer, he must necessarily annihitlate himself, his condition confirming him thereunto whether he will or not. Herein appears the truth of what we faid, that Ab; negation is a disposition which no creature, no man, neither can, or must eternally go out of : Self-demail is the first estate wherein the foul that would men to God, and receive the grave of Justificación, must be, the reason is manifest. Man by for is turned and separated from God, to the, mite, and apply himself to the creature s. To go out of Sen, and turn himself to God, he must necessarily go out of himfelf, renounce himfelf, and all bimfelf from himfelf, if he will be mired to God, and be perfettly converted. This is to be

be done by self-denial, whereby the soul remounteeth the creature, and annihilateth in her
felf all that the is. In a word, the goes out of
her felf, to return unto God, which the does,
affifted by grace, which draws her back, and
separates her from what diverts her from
God.

Let us consider this first truth, by the prineiple and light of faith; Since the fall of Adam we are not fundlified, but by, and in Jefus Chrift, we cannot be faut fied as children of Adam, but as members of Jesus Christ, and as the new creature in Jesus Christ. This Principle of faith granted, it follows, that if we will take part with grace and holiness, and be fundlified in Jefus Chrift, we must necessarily renounce our felves, and neafe to be to our selves, that we may be to Jefur Christ, which cannot be but by felf-denial ... This was the flate of Saint Paul at his conversion, and the fense of his words, when he layes, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. . Thus we must understand these words of the Son of God, directed to all Christians : If any man will Man come after me, let him deny bimfelf: wherein appears how necessary this vertue is to all fouls that would follow Jefus Chrift, and turn to God.

Thirdly, felf-denial is the contre of Christi-

Gal. 2, 26

Mat. 16,

Spirishall Treasure 3

the shall find, the Sound God founded his chirch, accomplished one Redemption, and will fave the World by the wayes of unabi-Mysterias of the description and the Graff, the propagation of the Fath, and the Conquest of the World, have been onely effected by theidebasement of the Word into our humanity, by by the grace of Christianity, which brings not thing but debatement, as shall be faid elsewhere. Whence it comes, that all Christians who would participate of this grace, who Subfilt in the bofom of the Church, and defire to live in the first of Christianity, must resolve to center into this way of abnegation, and manhelation, in regard that all the life, and all the grace they can hope is in the life and grate flowing from Jefus Christ, of whose fulness we have all received. If this life and grace flow from Jefus Christ, it must be confohant to his life; it must bear his qualities and properties, as the River hath no water but that of the fource, leaving the taft and imalities thereofy So all onr graces being of figue, as their Fountain and Principle; they must necessarily be all conformable, and like to him. Now no man can be ignorant, that all the graces of the Son of God, are in lowness and D'W

and annihilation. The Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, the foundation and first principle of christian grace, was operated in, filed by Saint Paul, The making bimfelf of no Reputation (exinanition:) The Word of God Phil. 1.8) is in the filence of infancy, his flrength in feebleness, the Throne of his greatness supported on lowness. In brief, what greater annihilation then that of the Croffe? All the life of Christ, and by consequence, all his gracer are in annihilation; thence we derive all those graces whereby we are affifted and (andified. What then may this operate in us? what can it require of us, but that which it felf is in its fource and principle, annihilation, devesting and abnegation. In a word, it can operate nothing elfe, for he that hath grade and its effects, must be in abnegation and annibilation. All the works of God in the foul, are by annibilation little or much, according to the measure of grace and faith in the foul that receives it. Let us ascend to the fource of this Truth. Confider, that as God hath created fo many and fo different creatures, for the beauty of the materiall World, fo in the order of grace, he hath made different wayes to come to him, one grace for Angels, andther for man, another for his Sonne, who by the Mystery of the Incarnation, became capable of grace, but of a grace proportion'd to the

Rom. 12,

the order and state of his incarnation; that of the Angels is not for us, that of men was lost in Adam, there resteth no other for us then that of Jesus Christ, whereby he repaires and fanctifies us. Now as this grace is superiour and neerer to God, because made for Jesus Christ, God and man, not for men, it followes, that they who will participate of it, must be elevated above their first capacity, and be united to Jefus Christ, to be by him united to God. Thus the grace that fanctifies us is by a holy Jesus, worthy and proportioned to the greatness of Jesus, infinitely elevated above our being and capacity. If then we would participate of this grace, we must necessarily be elevated to an union with Jesus, forced above our own capacities, to be made capable to receive and bear this grace. If I would arrive to this union and capacity, I must go out of my self to be united to Jesus Christ, I must die to my self to live in Jesus. This is the work of felf-denyall and annihilation, this is the effect of grace, for one is not without the other, no more then the effect can be without the cause.

This is the point St. Paul speaks of, when he calls christians, Sacrifices, to shew that the state of christianity, brings death and self-denial, and that the christian must be continually before God, as a living Sacrifice hely and

acceptable

acceptable to him. So he speaks all along; ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ Col.3.3. in God; and elsewhere, that christians are dead and buried with Jefus Christ, living in him and with him, we are buried with him Romis. 4. by Baptisme, in whom also we are raised up again. In brief, this Oracle of Truth, every where shewes, that the pirit of christianity is a spirit of death, of self-denyall and annibilation. Whence we must conclude that he who would live according to christian grate, and acquit himself of the Protestations and promifes he made in Baptifme, must be in felf-denyal and annihilation.

CHAP. XIII.

What Abnegation is; and the meanes to attain it.

HE precedent Discourse, shewes the necessity of abnegation, if we will be perfect, that it is the Centre of christianity, it followes, that he who would embrace true vertue and solid piety, and participate of christian grace, must first exercise himself in this vertue, and practife it, without fo much bufying himfelf in other exercises lesse profitable. It is hard to teach, and to perswade

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annihila-

many fouls to this vertue, who, as the Apofile-Tit. 1. 1. fays, traffique with piety, and feek only them. Phil. 2. 21. felves in all they do, but more hard to convince those that are drown'd in worldly affairs, or buried in their own lufts, and perhaps, what is faid of this vertue, though little in comparison of that which God merits, and requires of us, appears too bigh and feedlative to those who already feem to boast of perfection, and believe the way of beaven more easie then it is. To all this, nothing can be better opposed, then the command of Jefus Christ; Be you perfect, as your Father is perfect; Now, if your perfection take it's aim to high, 'tis not fo mean and common as fome think it; On the other fide, if we find this annihilation new, and think it too difficult, let us consider the words of the Son of God pronounced

Mat. 18.3: with much energie and efficacie; Verily I say unto you, except you be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of beaven. What more cleer and greater annihilation can God require, then to command the greatest and mightiest, to become as children? St. Paul wishes those that think themfelves wise, to become fools? For, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. He that believes, must captivate his judgement, and according to the common saying, annihilate his reason, whereby we acknowledged that

and

mended and necessary to all Christians, to all that will be saved, not an indifferent amibilation, but proportioned to the grace and glory that a man would possess. This supposed, let us examine what it is, and the means to attain it.

The first is an efficacious defire of this vertue; we must defire it, and look uponit as necessary for him that would be in grace, proper and convenient for a Christian. We must often excite this defire in our heart, and form in our foul an alienation and displeasure of too great a love born to our felves, and of that adherence and fastning which we have for the creature. And for as much as one of the greatest bindrances to vertue, is to think tacitely or actually that we have vertue, we must believe that we are at a great distance from the purity and perfection God demands of us, and are filled with our felves, the affection of the creature, and voyd of God. Hence we proceed and raife in our felves a continuall hunger after God, a defire and a firm purpose to approach unto him, to love him, to please him, and to separate our selves from our fetoes, and from all creatures. We must think upon these words, Thou sayest, I amrich, and R w. 3 17. encreased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not thou art wretched and miserable

Evangelick perfection practifed and preached by Jesus Christ, consistent in two points, in love of God only, and in hate of our selves; we must study to establish and advance our selves in these two Principles, we must vigilantly seek God, in all occurrences, in all things, at all times, and annihilate our selves upon all occasions and objects presented to us.

The second Practise must be actual abneyation, we must study to annihilate and go out of our felves. This may be done two wayes; One, when we feek occasions to practife felf-demiall, or choose some exercise upon this subjest. This is for those who have courage and a great desire to be God's, and to live good Christians: But many believe not that they ought to renounce, and have not sufficient courage to feek occasions to annihilate themfelves. There is another manner whereby they may profit by this exercise, which is to reteive with a spirit of self-deniall whatever happens to them, and to entertain it as from the hands of God, without which nothing can happen unto us, and to whom all the powers of the earth are subject : Here the foul must have a care to be faithfull to God when any occasions occurre to practise the interiour or exteriour self-denial, to make good use of it,

as God shall give him power, and according to the objects God shall cause them to be presented to him. It is a Lesson that all Christians ought to learn, that we are obliged, and it must be our continual endeavour to destroy in us the old man, even in the least things, if we will have the new Adam, Jesus

Christ to live in us.

If it be demanded what felf_demall is, fince it concerns us so much to practife it's I anfiver, to practise self-deniall, is to go out of our felves, and to fever our selves from the creature, to employ our heart, and make our felves fit to bear God, for our heart is God's, and he created it by his power, he consecrated it by his grace to dwell there, and be there as a Father in his family; the Sun in the heavens, a King in his kingdom: Sin drives him from thence, the love of our selves and the creature holds the place of God, and hath the boldness and rashness to feat it self in the Throne of God. This love of our felves and of the creature, reignes tyrannically in us, usurps the right of divinity, does all there that God ought to do. The duty of a Christian is to establish God in his Throne, to re-place him in his heart, and to let him raign in his foul. To do this we must necessarily drive away this love of our selves, and exturpate our affection to the creature. This is the office of felf-Q 4 deniall,

denyall, which annihilates us, and makes us go out of our selves, and clear our heart to

replace therein the fulne s of God.

To practife felf-denyall, and for a man to go out of himself, is to have no other defire then purely to please God, to have no other will then his , to have nothing but God before his eyes, and to quit all considerations of the World, onely to feek the glory of God. To go out of our felves is to lose the care of our selves, either of the foul or body, to commit our felves wholly to the will of God, to abandon our selves wholly to his conduct, and the order he hath established from all eternity over our life. It is to think no more of that which concerns us, and to defire no more that any love us, or esteem us, no more to seek our own interefts or fatisfaction, but onely the pure will of God. Sotalive, is to go out of, and to annibilate our selves; for the soul by these practifes, renounces and annihilates in her felf all affections, all respects, all care of the Creature, all that is not God or of God, and fo renders her felf capable to poffess God.

To attain this practife of this vertue, befides the meanes already supposed, a third may be added, which is, when God himself operates in the soul the annihilation he would have there, and there are two ordihary wayes that he makes use of herein, one by christian and justifying grace, which cannot be in the foul, till he drive thence, and annihilates what is contrary to him, and as far as it reigns herein, and possesses the beart it proportionably annihilates in us this love of our felves, and of the Creature fo truly, that we may fay, there is as much of the one, as there is little of the other, for grace and the leve of our felves cannot reign together, one drives away the other. Befides grace, God makes use of divers favours and communications fecret and interiour, as lights, motions, and other divine and loving operations, whereby he infallibly operates felf-demyall and annihilation in us. It is a true principle, that God never operates any effects which bring not purity, self-denyall, and annihilation into the foule; where these effects meet not, it is a certain mark that it is not the work of God, for God who is purity, cannot operate but purely, he is alwayes like himself. If there be an operation of God, there is purity, and confequently annihilation, for purity annihilates impurity. If in the operation which the foul bears, there is not the effect of purity and annihilation, 'tis not an operation of God, or an effect of grace, but an effect of proper or natural love, or elfe of the Devill, robo can transform himself into an Angel of light, but he cannot give the foul the effects of light, which

which is to be observed thereby, to know how to discern naturall operations from those

of grace.

This truth will appear most clear, if we confider the defigns of God in his divine and loving communications. We know that God doth not communicate himself, nor work in our fouls, but to prepare and render them worthy and capable to receive him; being therein received, he will possess and fill them with his fulness. How can all this be done in the foul, if God at first by his operations doth not purifie the foul, and feparate it from all things? without doubt, if God operate, you shall see all these effects, and therefore the foul that will be perfect, must narrowly look into all this, and have an extraordinary vigilancy to become faithfull and attentive to the operations of God in her, on one fide to correspond thereto, and to labour after the manner God inspires her with, on the other to annihilate ber felf, not the works of God, for if we oppose not our felves to grace and the effects thereof, if we do not annihilate the works of God in us, God will certainly work great things in us. But alas! the wayes whereby we make use of devotion in this age, are more capable to drive God away, then to invite shim into our hearts. I shall describe them unto you. The

The foul blinded with natural love to her felf, defires to be brought up in the gifts of God, she would enjoy him, and would love what feems good and profitable to her; she fills her self with divers desires, she tyes her felf thereto, and will continually act and attain, the puts her felf into all employments and motions, she feeks them, she pleases her self with a satisfaction that her own love takes in things most boly, and in the very operation of God, she feeks her felf therein, the elevates her felf thereto. In this manner, the opposes her self to the spirit of Jesus Christ, and annihilateth the work of God, who would onely live in her, onely occupate her spirit, onely posfess her, desiring by the power of his love to annihate in her all that is of her. Jesus Christ would take away, and this soul will add to, God would disposses and spoyl, and she would acquire and possess. Thus the hinders and destroyes the workes of God, driving God out of her, and out of her spirit, to cause her own love to raign there, her own satisfaction and will, a vanity ordinary to fuch fouls as are wholly confumed in the spirit of Adam. They therefore who tend to perfection, must go with all purity and fimplicity, they must feek nothing but God, and to please God, but

but above all, they must be very circumspect and attentive to his inward operations, having a great care and sidelity to
leave the spirit to act by the grace of
God in them. As all this is very secret and interiour, and often is in the very centre of the
soul, so must we take heed thereto, and besides the vigilance necessary, it is good from
time to time, to practise these ensuing acts.

First, to give our selves to fesus Christ, to live in him, and to bear the spirit and effects of this self-denyall, after the manner

that pleafeth him.

Secondly, to renounce our felves, our fecret vanity, and all that is in us opposite to

grace, and to the operations of God.

Thirdly, to be attentive to the motions and operations of God in us, especially when he acts by self-denyall and privation, as well interiour as exteriour, to co-operate therewith, either by action if it be necessary, or by consent of the soul giving her self to God, to receive what God shall operate in her, when the soul shall feel divers motions, or meet several occasions to practise vertue, she shall alwayes choose those where there shall be privation and self-denyall, as the most assured may, and the most acceptable to God, most for the bonour of Jesus Christ, and most conformable to his bumane life.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, the shall pray to Jesus Christ, to wouch fafe to operate and put into her all that he wills, and to annihilate in her all that he requireth, to prevent in her by his light and love, the time of death and judgement, where to he must annihilate the thoughts and judgements of men.

The abridgement of the third Part.

have coording but white seeds but cor ficin

CHAP. XIV.

Treating of the dependance of the Soul upon God.

even those who think they have vertue enough to save them, many deceive, and altogether lose themselves, taking the shadow of vertue for the substance, apparence for truth, like the Dog in the Fable, who let go the good morfell he had hold of, to catch a shadow, these neglect the solid vertues and principall foundations of piety to insist on certain exteriour estions, which have no substance but in the air of imagination; they exercise themselves in morall vertues, and despise the Christian; they compose the exteriour, and form their

their demeanour, and neglect the interiour; they fear to displease men, and endeavour to latisfie their kindred and friends, but care no more to please God, then they fear to displease him's they would feem good, but tare not to be lo. In a word, in all things they choose the most beautifull and best, and will have nothing but what is good; but for their fouls, that which is least best contents them's they feek but that which is necessary, what gives them greatest liberty and satisfaction, they embrace with all their heart.

God, who is truth, is not fatisfied with

these feignings, and wills, that we ferve him in fpirit and truth, he detefts a lye, and curfes those that serve him with the mouth onely; if he 162.29.13. love, he will be beloved; and as his love is most pure and perfect, he will have ours to be fuch alfo. Whence it is easie to comprehend, that to be a perfect Christian and friend to God; requires great qualities. He must have a golden key that will enter into the Kings chamber's he that will come to a royall feast, must be clothed with a wedding garment, left he be bound

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darkneß. To be a perfect Christian, is not so flight a business as some think it, it belongs to God only to make a man just, it is the work of his band, and greater then the treation of the

hand and foot, and cast into prison and atter

world.

world, at least in this, God shews himself more powerfull in his love, and more admirable in his mercies. Therefore, when we fpeak of a good and perfect Christian, we speak of Gods bandy-work, of a man worthy to be a Saint, for to be faved, and to be Saint; is one and the same thing. Now, what ought the foul of a Saint to be, who must one day fee God, live with God, (faith St. Bernard in his Meditations) and be eternally in unity with God; what must the perfection of a foul be, that shall become worthy fo infinite and incomprehensible a happiness, whereto all aspire that would be saved? Heave it to their thoughts, who know how to efteem of the works of God, and make account of the greatness of Paradise, and shall onely tell those languishing and easie spirits, with Saint Paul, Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for Gal. 6.7,8 what soever a man soweth, that shall he reap also; for he that someth to the flesh, Shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, Iball of the spirit reap life everlasting. Whereupon we must reflect, that Christians, who are to reap the incorruption of the life everlasting, if they will arrive to their hope, must fow in the spirit, as the Apostle sayes, and do actions worthy fo great a recompence.

This is the way that this third part sheweth, where are deduced and advanced those

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dispositions and vertues which lead us to this estate, and to make us perfedt. Indeed many other vertues might be proposed, but these contain all, and infallibly guide to the estate God requires of us. Faith makes us know and efteen of God, it shews us the way to God, and leads us to the knowledge of our selves; this knowledge draws us to humility, that humbles us and difposes us to receive God; the good defire, if it be efficacious, draws us to God; purity makes us worthy of God; and felf-demall brings to the fulnes of God. He that hath God, hath all, he is perfect, and he that hath not God, is nothing, and hath nothing. Do what he can, though he should do miracles, (as Judas probably did) he can do nothing that is perfest, no work worthy of beaven, for it is God onely that works in us the works of grace, and who is the principle of our merits (which muft be well noted) therefore he that will be faved, and become a perfett Christian must aim only at this point. All that we have proposed ferve hereunto. The first thing demanded is to endeavour to have a good foundation, and a finsere uncorrupted interiour, to conduct us according to the principles of Faith, and the maximes of Christianity, to regard God in all things, to please him, or at least, not to displease him, with particular care to annihilate the the spirit of Adom, and the spirit of the world, for they are enemies to God, they can no more dwell together, then Joseb and Esqu. After all these dispositions, the soul must depend upon God, and be wholly left to his operations and conduct, and be very vigilant to shew her felt faithfull to correspond with the graces and operations of God, and not to withdraw her felf from his conduct, and the order he would take with her.

This last point is of great consequence, and deferves to be a little more infifted upon for it is the last touch we shall give to the Image of a perfect Christian. We must observe, that in the order of grace, it is not as in the order of Nature. In nature, that which is most dependant on it's cause is the most impersed, as the found and voice which is fo dependant on its saufe, that it ceafes to be when it chafes tabe produced: In nature, that is effected most perfect which hath the least dependance. It is otherwise in the state of grace, that is most perfect which is neerest and the most dependant on its cause and principle God; so that he that sends to perfection, must be in a great dependence on God, and not ad but in this diffestion, and by a generall resignation of bimfelf to God: To put and establish himfelf in this offate, he must have a pure regard of God, that is he must hold all of God, and have have no other object but God in his thoughts or actions. When he perceives any care, defire, motion, &c. arifing in him, which he believes not to be of God, he must annihilate and renounce it, protesting to will nothing but him and the accomplishment of his divine will. A foul that would live in resignation, and in a true dependance on God, must live in the unity of the object, that is, having regard only to God, herein confists the true dependance whereof we speak, she must not go out of this dispofition, to regard what she doth, or what she shall do, not so much as what may happen to herupon any manner of occasion; she shall have all care possibly, that she enter not into these thoughts, contradictions and afflictions wherein she is, or which may happen to her, but the must receive all from the hand of God with gentleness and patience, regarding him as the Authour of all things, and fubriting her self in all and by all to his most amiable will, saying with a fervent (pirit, What have I in beaven, or what have I defired in the earth besides thee, my Jesus. It is not fufficient for her to be in this interiour disposition, nor that in prayer, or her good desire the remain in this nakedness, but she must also walk in the spirit of simplicity by an exteriour conduct, abandoning and remitting her actions and affairs, and all manner of fuccess to the

the good pleasure of God, with a perfect comfidence in the love and divine providence of Fefus, not feeking in any thing either fatiffaction or profit; much less cansolation; but defiring purely to please God, and to be wholly to him, according as he hath ordained her. To make this disposition more perfect, she must not onely submit her actions to the pure will of God, but also all her secret and smallest motions, as well of nature as of grace, that fo the may be wholly resigned to God, and in a bare and simple dependance. It is not necessary that the regard her progress and advantage, nor that the destre to be perfect, but onely that by esteem, respect and confiding in the love of Jefus, the abandon her felf entirely and purely to the care and prudence that he hath for her

To conclude, as the foul most purely walks in the wayes wherein God will lead her, so must she also endeavour to follow the light of Faith, and maximes of Jesus Christ, which shall serve her as a guide; thus shall her heart become pure and neat, having no other intention, nor other hope, but to be to God, and to please God, caring for nothing else; she shall fill her spirit with a great esteem of God, and respect to his greatness and the infinite power of the divinity, and sense of her own meanness, and in the spirit of bumility abandon R 2

her felf to Jesus Christ, to be whally to him, and to live altogether in a dependance on his holy will and divine Ordinances. The foul living in thefe dispositions, it will be easie to avoyd all forts of disquiets; the shall remain in a boly indifferency; the shall not trouble her felf with her ordinary imperfections, neither take care to change or not to change, to-converse, hold, or be conducted by this or that. She shall be so little fenfible of parents, her friends, her defires; yea, the supernaturall graces, and all things, that her onely regard being to God on whom she depends, and to whom she is wholly abandoned, her only solace, end and contentment, shall be to please him, and to leave her self to the perfect and pure submission of her will to the conduct of God, and his divine wisdome.

For want of this disposition, there are many, (alas too many) who live in disquiet, perplexity and agitations of spirit. The want of this vertue, causing so many complaints and repinings, so many inward and outward dissipulties (among souls who follow devotion) so many cares, doubts, desires, and propositions: which proceed not from the perfection that we posses, nor from solid vertue, whereof we have not one grain, but from self-love, from adhering to our own wills.

commonly from secret vanity. We fall not into these evils, but because we have not sought God purely, but our selves, and our own satisfactions; and for not endeavouring the possession of solid and Christian vertues. The remedy of all this, you shall find in the Image of a perfect Christian, which I here present to your view: Consider the vertues which imbellish him; labour to attain them; see the dispositions wherein he is, how pure and solid they are, endeavour to enter into them, and concern your self therein, and I am consident, that you shall find a stable peace, you shall put a Paradise into your heart, you shall find in all that hath been said, the foundation of this pourtraid, and the interiour of a perfect Christian.

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THE FOURTH PART.

Sheweth how we must guide our Jelves in all occurrences, and in all estates of bumane life.

CHAP. I.

Of the care a Christian ought to have to perfect his exteriour.



O draw the last lines of our perfedt Christian, we must present likewise his outward appearance, for therein also consisteth his perfection.

The interiour and the exteriour are two estates fo conjoyned, and dependant one upon another, that the perfection of a man cannot be intire, if those two estates are not in all things conformable. One is the image of the other, and as the ancient divine Philosopher

pher said, Beauty is a staff of goodness, as all showers and leaves take their beauty from the root, so all that is outwardly fair in man, is but a beam of his inward goodness, the fruits and leaves of his perfect and vertuous actions, are but the effects of the root of inward perfection, and administration and minimal perfection.

Inward perfection begets the outward, one cannot be without the other. Good if it be perfect, must be such in all parts, if one fail, this defect takes away its vertue, and makes it vicious. Man is a whole composed of parts, neither all soul nor all body, but consisting of both. To be good, he must be perfect in both, in the soul the interiour, in the body the exteriour, in the actions of the one, as the faculties of the other.

St. Ambrose speaking of the Mother of God, the pattern of vertue, saith, that her exteriour Beauty, her demeanour, and the adiens of her life, were images of the vertues and incomparable perfections of her soul, and although Jesus Christ by the Mystery of the Internation, meant to hide the greatness of his Divinity, in the lowness of our nature, and hid himself thirty years in an obscure life, yet it alwayes appeared from time to time, nor could he avoid it, but that his face, his body and actions, discover d what he was. Nor indeed could it be otherwise; for the exterior

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or can have no good but what it borrows of the interiour as of its root, and the interio our cannot be perfect, but the exteriour will bear and manifest the effects thereof. Vertue if it be true, hath a lustre like the Emerald which foarkles in the obscurest night, it can no more be hid, then fire can be retain'd in the bosom of the Earth, which will force a way to its centre; or the light of the Sun be clouded by any shade so thick, but its beams will break through, So likewife is it impossible for a man to have a good vertuous interiour, and the splendor of his verthe not appear to the eyes of men, through the most secret of his actions. This is the intention of God, and a fign that the vertue we have is beavenly, for it tends alwayes to its Loadfone, is in perpetual motion, till it hath found her North: So the foul touched by the vertue of Heaven, is alwayes in action feeking every where till the have found her God.

Men light not a Candle to put it under a Bufbel, God gives not vertue to fmother it; he will glorifie himfelf in his Elett. If our vertue be of God, it will manifest the effects thereof, canfing it felf to be honour'd and acknowledg'd.

For this reason, they who have any sense of Heaven, who love the truth, and walk

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fincerely, never approve those who diffem-ble in the World, and appear evil or lesse good, not regarding the exteriour, fo they have a good intention, let the rest go as it will. (It is fufficient (they fay) that God knowes them,) they alwayes condemn those who out of reasons of state, or private confiderations ontwardly appear either evil or indifferent, hide themselves when they prays dare not communicate in publick, or do any act of vertue, in view of their Neighbours.

We must not indeed endeavour to be feen, much leffe to be efteemed, or affect the fight of men, but on the other fide, we must not fear them. We are oblig'd to have an exteriour as well as an interiour, and we must please and bonour God, as well by the exteriour as by the interiour. Every one will grant, that it is not allowed any to be good, and to appear evill; it is scandalous, may further, it is impossible to be good, and commit evill actions, for a good Tree cannot bring forth evill fruit. If we live in the spirit (faith St. Eaul) let in alfo walk in the fpirit's he meanes, our life Mat.7.18. is a life of God, for spirit with St. Paul fig. Gal. s. 25. nifies God, and if our interiour be truly per-feet, according to Christian persection, whereof we have fufficiently spoken, our exteriolo attions must also be in spirit, and in a divine spirit, and must bear the

image of God, who lives in usa on

This may be more clearly understood by the advice of the same St. Paul; we walk not (faith he, speaking of good Christians) after the flesh, but after the spirit. He then that on. 8.4. will be a good Christian, must order his outward actions according to the spirit of God who lives in us, not after the flesh and the World, enemies to the spirit of God. To be vertuous, and to do acts of vice, to have light in the heart, and to do actions of darkness, to be in the Temple of God, and to facrifice to Beal, can neither be comprehended by man, nor approved by reason. To defire to please the World, and to be circumcifed and worship the Moon, is to be a Samaritan: God loves simplicity, sincerity, and curses the double heart. He then that will be a perfect Christian, must have his heart in his hands, and his hands in his heart; if he efteem God truly in his heart, he must thew it in his works; if he fear God in his foul, why doth he not tellifie it in his actions? what can we love thee well, O God of our fouls, yet make they to hate thee ? Can . we have thee in our hearts, and thy enemy the World in our hands and mouth? No no, a Christian, if he fear God at home in his own house, will fear him abroad in the Kings Palace. The devout foul, who beholds God

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in her heart, and fees nothing but God there, beholds him every where. She knowes not that the World fees her, she onely knowes her God, beholds her, and the her Gods that fuffices her. If a Christian love his God, he will love him every where, and not confidering men, he will fay with the spouse, my God is mine and I am bis. The Christian Ma-16. fter St. Paul, gives us a good lesson upon this fubject, and in divers places furnishes us with reasons to perswade us to the care we ought to have of the outward man, and of the actions that appear to the eyes of men, he sayes, that first we owe to God, the care of perfecting our exteriour, for God will be honoured by our actions. This object we must have continually before our eyes, this thought must never go out of our fouls; the reason Rom 14. that the Apostle gives is, that we are not our 8. own but Gods, whether we live or die, we are the Lords, faith he, and confequently in all our exteriour actions, we must have a regard to God, as if I should say, whether at Court, in publick or private, in happiness or misfortune, in what estate loever I am in of death or life, what condition foever I live in . I am Gods, and therefore must so order my self that in all conditions and estates, I may honour God by my actions, that my exteriour may be as agreeable to him as my interiour. Know · COO

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you not, faith the Apostle, that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, tohich ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorific God in your Body. By the first words, he shewes the dignity of our bodies, seeing that they possess the boly fpirits by the roft, the obligation we have to take care of our exteriour, that it may give God the honour he expects. This Dodrine stops the mouth of all the reasons, or rather excuses of those who diffemble what they are, and (not esteeming the exteriour) content themselves with good intentions. We must, fay they, live among the living, we must accommodate our felves to men, and a thousand such metties to which there need no other answer then that of the Apostle, you are not for your selves or your own Inweels, nor for your friends, nor for the World; give unto God what you owe unto God, and to Cafar what you owe unto Cafar.

If this reason be not sufficient, Saint Paul gives you another, taken from the condition of Christians, and which they profess, holy and perfect. As a Gentleman is oblig'd to live like a Gentleman, a Prince like a Prince, every one according to his quality; so a Christian must live according to the quahey of a Christian, his exteriour life must be

conformable to the flate of Christianity which he professeth. I have shewed you, faith St. Paul, and prayed you to walk worthy , Thef. 2. of God, who hath called you to bis Kingdom and 12. to his glory. As the quality of a Christian is most noble that man can be advanced unto, in which quality, he must appear before the Tribunal of God, to receive judgement and recompence of his actions, it is but necessary his life and actions, his government and converfation, be conformable and worthy of fo high and divine a quality, whereto the same Apostle exhorts us, I befeech you that you malk warthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. This is all that is required of a Christian, that in what estate, condition, or manner of life foever he be, he live after a manner worthy of Christianity. Let this be his first defign, the Subject of his examen; let all his care be to profess what he is by his altions. The first thing that a Christian must regard in his adione and exteriour, is not to fee if he be conformable to the rank he holds among men, and to his condition in the World, but rather to be conformable to the flate he professes before God; herein confifts the fidelity and courage of a Christian. This care of our exteriour is not an indifferent instruction, but a Law from Heaven pronounced by Jefus Mat. 5.16. Christ's Let your light so Shine before men, that they

they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven. He will have us concerned in our neighbours, and for love of them strive to live well, to be unto them a

mirror of vertue.

This is not therefore an advite, but an obligation to give good example, and by our good actions, to shew others what they ought to do : Example by sweetness of attraction wins the heart, binds the will; captivates the affections, if vertuous, it makes vertue to be deified, it constrains us to love it, and by the rule it bears over our hearts, innsinuates and instills the vertue which it exerciseth; For men (faid the Morall Philosopher) give more credit to their eyes then to their ears. From this principle is derived our obligation, to let our light shine before men, to preserve a vertuous and exemplary exteriour ; We are a freet favour of Christ, faith Saint Paul, teaching us, that our exteriour should have the odour of the vertue of Jefus Chrift, and not only have the favour; but be the very favour it felf; fo much God desires the perfection of our works, words, recreation, conversation, employments, affairs. In brief, all our actions must favor of Jefus Christ, and bear the odor of his vertues: we must not pervert this counsel to formall affectation. True vertue is masculine and noble, every where it rules with modesty, the spirit of God walketh with Majesty

2 Cor. 2.

jesty in bumility; all that we require, is to profess vertue every where, not to be ashamed to shew that we are God's, that we respect his divine Majesty, that we fear his Judgements. He that hath a good interiour, let him shew it by the exteriour; let him dissemble nothing, but walk alwayes in fincerity, remembering that he is in the fight of God, Angels and men, who behold him, and shall one day be his Judges. By the same reason that we labour to perfect our interiour, we must endeavour to perfect the exteriour, for common fense teaches us, that by our exteriour, we must please God, and render him as much honour as by the interiour.

To recollect and profit by what is faid, let us learn to perfect our exteriour, and have regard to God onely, to conform our allions to the state and dignity of Christianity. Let us remember, that the rule whereby God will judge us at the hour of death, will not be that of bonour, nor of men of the world, much less that of our Interests, but of his will and his bonour: we are only in the world for his honour, to do his holy will, we are his, and for him, and it is reason we should render to

God what we owe him. and to more and an

of his Mereys, and shough his defination as ture cause handom stones to superatehinsfell nand Cod, to be lathe wiferder of his

CHAP. II.

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That in all our Actions we must follow the conduct of God.

He Creature, by the condition of it's being, subfifteth only in religning it felf to the conduct and will of God; for as it be longs to God alone to give being to all things, fo is he alone the preferver and governour of them. Whence as the creature bears God in its depth and its centre, fo it bears in the same depth, a capacity, all that he operates in and by it, which capacity, the Philosopher calls obedientiall power, whereby all that is created is left to the power of its Creater, and refigued to his conduct.

Man must be subject to this indespensable Law, he cannot exempt himself from this fubjection whereto he is bound by the necesfity of being treated, a necessity so absolute, in what effate foever he be in this world, or the other, in time or eternity, that he must be fubject to the power of his Creator, whether in the rigour of his Justice, or in the sweetness of his Mercy; and though his depraved nature cause him sometimes to separate himself from his God, to live in the diforder of his

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own will, contrary to the order of God, yet he cannot absolutely withdraw himself from the order of his divine providence, nor avoid the arm of God, who comprehends all things, difpofes them; and causes them to arrive to the end that he hath proposed them, for this order and power is so generall, that the malice of men cannot be exempted from it, fo much is the creature subject to the conduct of the Creator. Necessity exacts it of us, the Laws of love and acknowledgement oblige us thereto, and that very firitly. For God who hath a particular providence, and an extraordinary cure of man, conducts him also, and loving him excessively, becomes his Father, King, and Prince, & his All, that being all things to man, man may the more willingly refigne himfelf to his loving conduct, not by conftraint or neces fity, but through a spirit offreedom, by an esteem of his love, by a holy and loving election;

These truths no man can be ignorant of, yet we make no use of them, for man defifeth the conduct of his God, shurs his eyes to the light of grace, neglects his most wholsome Laws, his certain counsels, his divine motions, withdraws himself from the dispofall and conduct of God, to adhere wholly to himself, to his own thoughts and inclinations, to the fuggestion of his own spirit, to follow the false maximes of humane prudence, the motions of his possions, the alurement of selflove;

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love. The perfect Christian must take heed that he do nothing inwardly or outwardly, but according to the order and conduct of God. Man in all his actions and motions, must neceffarily be either in the conduct of God, or of himself; if he adhere to one, he is opposite to the other; for those he conducts, are in themselves absolutely contrary. The condust that man takes of himself, is a turning from God, a way that separates us from God, and quite loseth us. The reason of this is, the fate of man after his fall, whose spirit is turned from God, subject to the Law of fin. bearing the feed of all faults and errors. He is so engulfed in this state of misery, that he cannot get out of it, though he endeavour all he can, if Jesus Christ draw him not out of it; he cannot return to God, if the Son of God do not lead him ; No man cometh unto the Father but by me. Now man who follows his. own conduct, his own inclinations, motions and will, withdraws himself from the conduct of Jesus Christ, and as his spirit is turned from his God, by the law of fin, so he withdraws himself from the conduct of Jesus Christ by his own will and actions. How can he but turn from God, and Separate himself more and more from him, and that so pomerfully, that so long as he remains in his bumane condition, he shall never beable so return to God, nor do any thing that may lead him to God,

To.14.1.

God, if he do not refigne himself to the conduct of Jefus Christ to be aided by his grace and mercy? This is the meaning of the words of Saint Paul, when he faid, The cars nall mind is enmity with God, for it is not fub- Rom 8.71 ject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be, and that to be carnall minded, is death; fince he Rom, 8. 6, loses himself who governs himself by his own firit, and onely follows his own conduct.

All the divine Oracles cry out to us, and experience teacheth us, that the greatest evil that can happen to man, is to be left of God, and abandoned to humane prudente, to his own motions, naturall inclinations and will. For a man fo abandoned of God, lives a dangerous life, and must expect a miserable fall, Ila joili Wo, faith God to them, when I shall be separated from them; wo indeed, yea, a threefold wo, feeing that when God leaves a foul to its own counsels, motions, inclinations, and will, she is at the fame inftant made captive, dragg'd, and led in triumph to her passions and appetite; for the paffions, will, and inclinations of men, are rebellious, and hurried by the Law of fin. Now, from the time that man is abandoned; and the conduct of Gods grace withdrawn from him, he can be no other then rebellions, falling into a thousand errors, and will infallibly toje himfelf, if God have not pity on him, and call him home. Therefore

for God to abandon us thus to our own conduct and will, is the greatest evill that can arrive to man, the greatest punishment whereby God can revenge himself of the sins of men. My people would not hear my voyce (faith God being angry,) and I frael would not obey me, fo I gave them up unto their own hearts luft, and let them follow their own imaginations. And St. Paul affures us, that Gods most rigorous punishment of the ingratitude of men, hath been to leave them to their own defires and appetites; God gave them up, faith the holy Apostle, to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own bearts.

Rom. I.

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It imports him therefore who would be a good Christian, and make his salvation fure, to fortake his own conduct, to annihilate his inclinations, passions, appetites, to confound his own will, to withdraw himself from the conduct of humane prudence, and from his own reason, to follow the conduct of grace, which is above reason, and illuminates and guides, that he do nothing but according to the fririt, law, and will of God.

To be guided by the spirit of God we must separate our selves, renounce the conduct of humane prudence, and annihilate our own wills. Our prudence and reason is faulty in every point, for in as much as it comes from us, it separates us from God as much

as it can. Humane nature and the will of man, in the corruption of fin, regards onely it felf, not God its supernatural end; the will inclines to felf-love, and cannot advance it felf to a true love of God, if it be not guided and aided by grace. There is another principle of misfortune in us, which is the love of our fouls, which lives of the fubstance of our fouls raigning in our hearts, and commanding our actions. This love acts for it felf, not for God, it is fo opposite to God, that as another Antichrist, it labours onely to destroy the works of grace in us, and to ruine his divine love, fpirit and conduct.

Hence we fee what a mifery it is, what danger there is in being withdrawn from the conduct of God, to live according to our own inclinations, according to humane conduct, I Col. 1. which the Apostle calls the wisdom of this so. world. For what must his life be, who sub-

mits himself to this sworn enemy of God? what must his actions be, who hath no other principle nor conduct then his own will, onely confident in self-love, who onely followes the motions, inclinations and thoughts of his reason? a reason deprav'd and dim falls irrecoverably. I will appeal to man himself, how often his prudence, reason, and conduct have deceived him? Into how many errours have

his inclinations and his passions precipitated

him?

Cor.I.

him? let him but consult his own Conscience. I beseech him to see whither he goes, and that in good time he renounce humane wish dom and his feeble reason, as much as God requires it, to follow the foolishness of the Crosse, the conduct of grace, for there is no other way of perfection, nor meanes to arrive at God, but by the power and humility of the Crosse, and by the conduct of Jesus Christ, our

way and our life.

If we would know what this conduct of God is, wherein it confifts, we must consider it two wayes. The first, generall and common to all, when all that a Christian does, is according to the rule of the Law of God. Thus we fay, the altions of men are all fubmitted to the conduct of God, when they are done according to the Law, and conformable to his will and the maxims of the Goffel. So David lived, when he faid, Thy word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths. For the Law of God proposeth the right end, the just meanes and measure of every action in particular, and of all in generall. The true Christian must have no other conduct of his actions, then this divine Law given by God to be the rule of mans life and principle of his actions, he must follow the knowledge and maxims which Jesus Christ taught upon earth, as a watch-tower and light to the fpirits of men,

Pfal. 119.

men, who being left to themselves, walkin darkness and ignorance. Counsel is mine, equity is mine, wisdom is mine, faith the spirit of God. He then that will live according to prudence, according to equity and justice, that will follow good counfels, must have them from God, for true prudence and true justice belongs to God. It is true, there ought to be prudence in the World, but it must be the prudence of God, which we cannot have but by obferving the Law of God. Lord, thou haft made me wife by thy word, faid David, who had try'd it. We must take counsel, for the difficulty of affaires perplexeth all things, but this counsel must come from God, and be conformable to his divine Lowes. So did 14. David alwayes in his affaires of greatest importance. Thy Testimonies are my delight and my Counfellors.

We ought indeed to uphold our felves, but it must be by the justice of God, not that of Plat. 172. men, but that which concurs with the law of 172. God, for all the Commandments of God, are righteousness, saith David. So the Christian doing all things with this respect, and doing nothing against the Law and Maxims of Jisus Christ, shall live in the perfect conduct of God, a happy estate whereto all Christians ought to aspire, and wherein they ought to continue, professing even to death, they have

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the Law of God and spirit of the Gospel; a rule wherein they must maintain themselves so powerfully and so inseparably, that no creature friend or Interest, can make them desire or do any thing contrary to this beavenly con-

duct.

There is another conduct of God, more hidden and invisible, when God vouchsafes by the motions of his grace, his inspirations and soving communications to conduct souls to perfection, and takes a particular care of them. Here the soul must take a great and vigilant care, that she quench not in her these lights, and resist not this divine and amorous conduct. This way is for souls who give themselves to God, who are wholly out of themselves, devested of, and severed from the Creature, who have annihilated their desires, inclinations and passions, who are wholly abandon'd to God, professing to live no longer then under the conduct of this divine spirit.

They who are thus bappy, must take great care to maintain their spirits in a neere alliance and unity with the spirit of God, to do nothing but by his conduct; they must take heed they admit not any thing, nor receive any other spirit which may separate them from that of God. In brief, they must annibilate all that is of the conduct of the Creature,

if

if they will live in a perfect conduct, and an intire resignation to the spirit of God, which is that which is desired in a perfect Christian, as being the meanes to arrive at perfection.

When we confider these truths, we shall find it hard to comprehend, and impossible to approve the method of those who would get perfection, attain true Christian vertues, and posses God, yet in all their conducts, study nothing but humane wisdom, act nothing but by humane respects, speak not without equivecation, are nothing but outward ceremonies, regard nothing but outward formality, aim at nothing but advancement. Let them speak what they please, bumane wisdom is but foolishness before God, and the spirit of grace and of Jesus is a spirit of truth, simplicity and sincerity. Those then that guide themselves by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, must live and act in the spirit of truth, simplicity and sincerity. for no other conduct is the conduct of God. Let no man abuse himself, faith St. Paul, if any among you think to be wife in this world, let bim become a fool that he may be wife, for the wisdom of this world is foolishes before God. 1 Cor. 3. Into che and town or other and certification chieffy it is require they have

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CHAP. III.

That a Christian must do all his actions for love of God, and for God.

The perfect Christian must not so much consider what he does, as the manner of doing; for men consider the face, God the heart. It is a maxime in Morality, that it suffices not to do good actions, but we must do them well, as the Philosopher saith; it is not enough to do just things, but they must be done justly, meaning, that an action to be good and just, must be accomplished with all these circumstances which are so necessary, that if this fail, all the rest will be desicient; good, if it be true good, must be accomplished in every point.

Now, our Question is not only of an action good and just, but which is more, of a Christian action, suitable to the eminence and purity of the state of Christianity, of an action worthy beaven and God. If it be reall, it must have circumstances onely pure and perfect, and chiefly it is requisite they have a proportionate object; for as actions are specified by their objects, so is it necessary that the doing and denomination of a true Christian action be

to confider, what is it's object which must be proportioned to the dignity, functity and purity of an action worthy God; which being supposed, this object can be no other then God himself, and therefore we must say, that as all the actions of Christians must be conformable to their state, all worthy of God, fo must they have God only for their object, and confequently a Christian to live Christianly, must have respect onely to God in all his actions, and to do nothing but with intention to please him. This is the wish of Saint Paul, when he prayed to God for the new Christians, to whom he writ, That you might walk, faith he, worthy of the Lord, as unto all pleafing. This counsell ought to be engraven in the memory of men; for either they think not of it, or are ignorant of it, yet is it altogether necessary.

Let us then suppose this to our perfect Christian, that to do acts truly Christian, and worthy of God, we must regard nothing but God, and have no other intent then to pleafe him. The reason is from the commandment of love, for by the same principle that we are oblieged to love God in all, and above all, we are obliged also to please him in all, and to feek onely his bonour, glory, and pleafure. He that knows how to love, will eafily comprehend the truth of this counsell; For love, if it be true, makes

makes us quit our own Interests and respects, to engage us in the interests and respects of the thing beloved. Again, to love (according to the Angelical Doctor,) is to wish well. Now, what good, what interest can God have in our action, but the accomplishment of his will and pleasure? God hath no need of us, for he is all-sufficient of himself. As by our fins we cannot diminish his glory, or pleasure, so neither can we augment them by the vertue of our actions; and that he makes them meritorious & worthy the possession of beaven, that he receives them as acceptable to the eyes of his divine Majesty, it is the effect of his bounty, not the power of necessity; it is by dignifying, not by duty or obligation; by love, not by interest, it is because he vouchsafes to regard them, and to be pleased with them; it is only because we do in them what his will is, we employ our felves in his Ordinances, and accomplish his defigues.

This Deduction and Principle being confidered, we must say, that seeing God receives nothing of us, or of our actions but the accomplishment of his divine Will; it follows, that a Christian, who will love his God, cannot express this love, but in performing the works of God in respect to God, and employing himself in the duties that God proposes to him: He that bath my commandments, faith our Saviour, and

keepeth

keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him; which shews, that the duty of a Christian consists in doing the works which God proposes and puts into his band, according to his condition and estate, to do it according to the good pleasure of God, and with an intent to do the will of God. In this the Christian shews his love to Gods this is the means whereby his actions become worthy to possess God.

To comprehend this truth, we must observe that all the creatures are nothing in themselves; they are as but a drop of water

drawn up by the Sun.

Now, if all creatures are nothing, man is yet less; and man being so small a thing, his action can be no more; but if the creatures, if man and his actions are any thing before God, it is onely in as much as they regard God, and have relation to him; For nothing is worthy of God, but what is of God, and for God. Heaven, the world, the earth, are nothing, yet are they esteemed worthy of Ila.66.1. honour, because heaven is the throne of God, earth is his footstool. We may say as much of man, although he be nothing in himself, or in his actions, yet they are most worthy by this relation to God, and regard of God. For as mean and prophane things are respected, being Savid

being confecrated and dedicated to God; fo our actions, though they be mean and unworthy of God, yet being referred and dedicated to his honour, and the accomplishment of his will, they are raised up, and become pleasing to God. Whence we acknowledge, that all is nothing, bot our actions, if they regard not God in this parity, and though they regard God, yet they conferre nothing to God, they are onely pleasing to him, because he outh fafes to regard them, and to take pleafure in them; he advanceth and fanttifieth them by this relation, fuch is his good pleasure. Herein appears the abuse of those who fill their hearts, and perplex their thoughts with feverall intentions. By this Principle, we fee how much they feparate themselves from their duty, who in their actions and devotions, feek any thing else but to please God; for all our actions are onely worthy of God, because they are onely pleafing to him, and nothing is worthy of him, nor pleasing to his divine eyes, but what is of him, and for him. Therefore one of the greatest faults to be observed in piety, which makes us most unworthy of God, is want of this regard of God. Many instead of referring all things to God, feek nothing but themselves, labour onely for themselves, and in all that they do, think onely of themselves; and if they should examine thems felves

felves as they ought, they would find that the end of their life and adions is nothing but their own Interest, and going on in the Labyrinth of these confusions, they will find, that seeking to do their own will, they do what God requires not, and fail to do that which he commands. By this abuse it appeares that such souls design their own health and prosit to be their end and the object of their adions. By so doing, God is no more their ultimate end, nor the centre of their life and actions, but their own interests and prosit take the place of God, an errour so manifest, that it is easie to perceive, and necessary to condemn the same.

Let us remember a principle very common, that teacheth us, if there were neither Heaven nor Hell to recompence or punish, yet we were obliged to devote our selves wholly to God, to fulfill his designes, and to render him bonour in every thing. This is an indispensable obligation whereto we are bound by the condition of our being, for as such we are Gods, being Gods, we ought to refer our selves wholly to him, and be onely for him. The fruit is his to whom the Tree belongs; if we belong wholly to God, our life and actions consequently must be referred to his honour, and wholly employed in the accomplishment of his Will. In effect, none can

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be ignorant, but that we are in the World to do the work that God hath put into our bands, according to our vocation, and according to the manner that he proposeth, and for the end that he hath ordained us.

Nothing is more evident; for what have we to do in this World, and what should our foul aim at, but to accomplish the will of God, and to do all our actions according to the defignes, and order established by the eternall wisdom? why are we in the World, if we please not God? How shall we please him, if we do not his will, and live not in the order he hath prescribed? To what end serves all the reft? whereto are directed all our attiens, if they are not acceptable to God?

This is the onely point of our happiness, the principall care that a Christian ought to have, to regard God in all his Actions, and to perform them in a pure defire to pleafe him. Let us endeavour onely to content God, and God will provide for all the aft, Them that honour me, I will benour, and they that despife me, shall be lightly esteemed; faith God to Eliah. O how happy shall that foul be, which at the houre of death shall be able to say with Jesus Christ, My God and my Father, I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do? Happy is the foul that forgets her felf to think onely

on God which lofeth it felf in all concerns thents , to feek onely the pleufine of God. Happy are those Christians who can fay mall their adions, we keep his Commandements and do all things which are opleaning before himsi Borimeffect, the Christian hadh nothing elfe to do in the World. We are obliged thereto: by the state of Christianity. St. Paulingives us a very evident reason, when he faxesh Cor. ?! freaking of the forme of God; He died for all, that they which live flould not benceforth live un to themselves, but unto him which died for them &. rose again, wherein is comprised all the duty of Christianity. The Apostle saying that Chrifians should not live to themselves, shewes the obligation they have to live to God, that is, according to the will of God; that in all their affiner, they ought onely to feek to please him all other thoughts are repugnant to the state of Christianity. The Sonne of God himself teaching his Apostles, and in them his Charch what to demand propoles to us Matth. 6. chiefly the fandification of the name of God, 9, 10. the establishment of his Kingdom, & the accome plishment of his divine will, thewing us by this leffon, which we ought to repeat daily what our thoughts, intentions, and prayers should be; that we must chiefly defire the glory pleasure, and mill of God. After to divine a precept, what have we to feek? why fo many merci-3477.

for formany intrictions, such multiplicity of thoughter. Let us seek to please God in all things, and take a continuall vigilancy, that we do nothing differentiable to God, or that is not conformable to the flate and vocation wherein God hath placed us. How can so many complainances, accommodations, consespendencies, affectations of busines prudence, tend to piety, when they are differentially to God, who lover nothing but protey? This is an evill that destroyes the purity of all our actions, an abuse that deceives the greatest part of Christianic and a series of the greatest part of

thians thould not true to themselves, thewes

of the templacency and self-satisfaction tobics drawes us from the pure regard of God, and of the purity of incentions which must be in our aftions.

If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of hight, but if thine eye be evel, thy whole body Mat. 6.13. Shall be full of darkness, saith the Son of God, of the dispositions and intentions wherewith Christians ought to do all their actions, showing by the similitude of the eye, that the intention must necessarily be pure, if the action permit it. For as the eye being single, makes the body full of light, so the intention being pure,

pure, makes the action pure: the end and object is that which advanceth or depresent the action, giving it the quality it beares. Now because the miention, to be pure and simple, must have, as we have faid, no regard but that of God the onely object of its action, a regard which seeks onely to please God, to accomplish upon the Earth and in Heaven his divine Ordinances, desiring no other estate then a bare simple subjection to his lowing conduct, this is that we call regard of

God, purity of intention!

- To transgress this repard and purity of intention, is to forfake the Sun to go into darkmefe, to destroy the perfection and purity which makes an action truly Christian. We ought therefore to have continually in our beare the prayer of David, Turn away mine prayer, leaft they behold vanity, as if he should 34. fay, Lord withdraw my thoughts and intentimo, which are the eyes of my foul, that they may be removed from all Creatures, which are but vanity, to be employed on thee alone who art the Truth. We have reason to require this of God, for this purity of intencion, this pure regard of God, is the most beautiful piece, the most behovefull to a Christian life, it is the onely mark that disinguishes night from day, darkness from light. In this point alone, the greatest part

Pral. 114

of Christians deceive themselves, taking the Shadow for the substance, vanity for verity; this is it we must examine, staning house

One of the greatest retardments that the foul finds in the way to perfection in any vocation or estate, is quitting the pure regard, and going out of the purity of intention to feek complacency and fatisfaction in something out of God. By reason of that com-placency and satisfaction the soul can never tafte God, nor arrive at perfection. We need no other proofs of this, then the difference between pleasing God and the Creature, between the glery of God and our own fatisfaction; they are two paths fo contrary, that it is as impossible for them to subsist together; as truth and fallhood, or bitter and fweet without corrupting. The foul who feeks her own fatisfaction, to please her felf in her felf, or any other thing, is as far from pleafing God, as the Creature is from God. Wherein appeares the abuse of those, who make no scruple to do their actions in regard of the Creature, and have no defire but to pleafe either themselves or some other.

Reason it self shewes us that those complacencies and felf-satisfactions, are unworthy a heart that God hath created onely for his pleasure, consecrated to his glory and bonour; of a heart I fay, that God will posses, and

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shall possess God to all eternity. They are unworthy of God, opposite to the purity of his lave. As God is pure in his entertainments, and jealous in his love, he never fuffers fuch an evill, feeing it is not becoming his greatness to divide his glory and contentment, to mingle his bonour with felf-fatisfaction and the complacency of the creature. The law of . love forbids this division; we are obliged to love God with all our heart, that is, perfectly, for as he that loves well, cannot love two things; fo he that will fatisfie himself, and please the creature, cannot satisfie God, or con-

form himself to his divine will.

The state of Christianity teaches this purity: for if we are Gods, and love only for God, why then all these satisfactions? The soul that defires to be faved, must onely feek perfection, that is God; for true perfection confifts in the possession and seeking of God, she must have no regard, but that of God, no other intention, but to please him. The Christian that pleafeth himfelf, and feeketh complacenby in any thing befides God, does quite contrary, he turns from the will of God, to feek that of the creature, or to fatisfie himself and loses the regard to God, (the most pure employment of his foul) to regard the creature, to take pleasure in it, and from that very time that he fuffers himself to be transported with 03

with this imperfection he tuens from God, to turn to the creative, which is the greatest misfortune that can befall a Christian. For turning to the creature, he makes himself an. worthy the favours of heaven, and if he continue fo, it will never be possible for him to taste God, or to possess the purity of vertue. If I yet, (faith St. Paul,) pleased men, I should not Gal. 1. 10. be the fervant of Christ. The word complacency is of great extent, it comprehends all that is not God, nor of God, and includes also the gifts of God, naturall and Supernaturall, of capacity and of grace, wherein it is never permitted to please our selves, or to feek our own fatisfaction. The reason is, because God dispenseth not his gifts, that we should settle our felves upon them, or make them the objetts of our love, or the Subjetts of our fatiffallion and complacency. He gives them only, because he loves us, and would make us worthy of his regard, love, and fovour: He gives them to make us capable to love and pleafe him, fuch is the define of God in this his liberality, whence we may thus argue: If God gives nothing but to obliege us to love and please him, it follows, that to use his gifts otherwise, be they naturall or supernatural, is to overthrow his intentions, and to destroy his work : and it is a kind of Idolatry to regard the gift more then the giver. In brief, it is

to make us unworthy of his favours, and to hop the course of his divine communications; and if we consider well, we shall confess, that it is the chief reason that oblieges God to withdraw his gifts and graces, and to turn away his eyes from us; whence we cannot expect less then a miserable fall, or to be abandoned of God, either for ever, or at least for a time. So fell Lucifer, so was the sirst man lost, and with him all humane nature. By the same fault many Christians are fallen from the state and capacity of grace, whereto God had elested them.

The world is aftonished when it sees some fall into great enormities, others into afflictions intolerable, agitations dangerous, and insupportable desertions. We demand whence these evils proceed, who hath precipitated so many souls from the heighth of grace and perfection? We may say what we please, but affuredly, this proceeds not from the ordinary course, but onely because we regard nothing but our own satisfaction, and quit the regard of God and pure desire to please him, to regard the creature to satisfic our selves, and take pleasure therein.

great undervaluing of God, an injury to his gifts; it is to hold unjustly the favours and graces of heaven, it is to put God beneath

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Rom. 1.

fuch fouls, as at other times it happed to the wife of the world, who when they knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankfulls wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanes through the lusts of their own heurts. He will do the same to Christians, who after they have received so many gifts of God, regard rather the gifts, then him, that gave them, and convert them to their own Jatisfastion, which is a greaten crime before God then we imagine.

If it be not permitted to delight our selves in the gifts of God, nor to feek fatisfaction therein, what shall we say of those who make use of them to enterinto an esteem of themselves, and who glorifie themselves in the endowments which God hath bestowed on them? How shall we judge of those who so exceedingly please themselves, and who glorific themselves in the capacity that God hath given them therein, in their exercises, in their vocation, in their bappy estate, who cannot entertain themselves with any thing else? What piety can those fouls have who are taken only with those that flotter and praise them, and believe none but those that esteem them, and fludy to give them all manner of fatisfaction? They have all cause to fear, for affuredly, (continuing fuch) they shall never tafte God or possess the spirit of true piety.

piety. Saint Augustine confesseth this with rears, faying, O Lord, I was putrified whilest that I took contentment in my felf, and endea-

confed to please the eyes of men.

Let us profit by these truths, remedy our abufes, and establish our selves in folia piety s let us lift up our eyes to heaven, and recollect what we have faid; Let us confider that God alone is the centre and end of our fouls, and that as the inclinations of all creatures tend to their centre, and the end drives and moves us to action, and is the rest and perfection of the work; so let us direct all our inclinations to God, and destroy all those that are contrary to him; fince he alone is our end, let him be also our thief regard, our first intention, the only defire of our fouls; Let us do all our actions according to our estate and vocation, as God shall give us the inspiration and means, but in doing them, let us regard nothing but God, Let us endeavour to have no other intention, but to do the work of God, to accomplish his hely will, to please and satisfie him in all things; Let us learn that God regards not whether we do little or much, fo that what we do be conformable to his will, and worthy of his love. This is all can be required of those who seek Christian perfection, and would make themselves worthy to passes God in heaven. min' mo lo mining all si anois

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CHAP.

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Of the care a Christian ought to have to do all his actions according to his vecation, and to maintain himself in the order and conduct of God.

Ext interiour dispositions necessary to Christian perfection, it is convenient to fpeak of the exteriour, to make our perfect Christian, see how he must comport himself to be perfect in all things. We have already fpoken of the care, we must have to appear cortuous and exemplary and to walk uprightly, as the Apostle fayes, according to the truth of the Goffel. Next we have shewed how all his adions must be squared to the Low of God, Subject to his conduct, which is the Law of his divine inspirations. Lastly, we have proved, that to do addiens worthy of God, and conformable to his fundity and the flate of Christianity, they must regard God, and have no intention but to please him. It remains that we shew what is the foundation of perfection, the most considerable in Christion piety, that is, how all our actions should be done according to our occation.

The life of man is a circle that comes forth from God, and must return to God. God alone is the Principle of our being, of our life, CHAP.

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and of our oftion, & as he is the beginning of them, so is he the end thereof. He is the Principle does all in us, he is our end, and recolls us unto himself, so that we bevealt of God, and are recolled back to God, for the creature bears a right capacity and inclination which can never be unnihilated, which causes it to substit, calls it back to it's God, there to adhere as to its repose and ultimate persection.

Herein we find two things remarkable which belong to our fubject; one, that God is the beginning of our actions, the other, that he is the end. He is the beginning of our actions, because there is no good in us which God due a not; of him we have the motion, thought, and will to do well; he gives us the effect of it, and not only gives us the power to do it, but himself does it in us, so truely that he is more the Authour of a good work then we our felves, and according to the Prophet, we should fay to God, Lord, thou haft wrought all our morks in us. It is God, faith Saint Poul, that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his 1fa, 26. 12. good pleasure; implying, not onely that God Phil. 2.13. joyned with our confine effect the work, but that by grace, God is in us after a new and fpe ciall manner united to our foul's which adhere to him, and by this union and adherence God fills the supacity which the foul hath to good

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good and to vertue, and operates in her, and by her the action of vertue, but so, that it is be who operates more then we: We operate, faith Saint Augustine; but it is God who operates in us this operation. Thus is God the Author of our actions, and the beginning of them, whence it follows, that he is also the end of our being and operations; the end of our being. because he is the Creator thereof, for according to the order of nature, that which is the beginning of a thing is also the end thereof, and by the order that God holds in his loving operations, he cannot act, but he must be the end of his action, and as he is the beginning of the being, action and perfection of man, fo is he the end theroof.

This Principle teaches us, that as God a-lone is the end of man, so he alone gives the meanes, and prescribes the order that he must keep to come to God his end. For as the Creature hath not power to draw it self from nothing, so hath it not the right to propose an end to it self; nor to prescribe to it self the order, way and meanes to come to this end; that appertains to God, who alone can give the being, propose the end, and prescribe the means. And when God hath prescribed the end and ordained the meanes thereto, yet cannot we follow the way, nor keep this order, if God himself doth not all in

us, conduct us, and work in us what is necessary to attain our end, for he alone is the beginning of all our actions, he performs both the will and the deed, We are his Workmanship faith St. Paul, (speaking of God) ereated in Christ Jefus unto good morks, which God hath before ordained that we fould walk in them: Eph. 2. 10. Hereby the Apolle heweth that God bath . regulated the life of man, ordained all his afteons, prepared all the good works wherein he wills that he should employ himself, that it is God who does all in us, and that we are his workmanship, fo all our fafety confifts in this, that God is our end, God alone hath ordained the meanes to arrive at our ends God alone must conduct and operate in us works nesely fary to that end whereto we are called. Herein confifteth all the bappiness of a Chris ftian, all the duty of our fouls, whence all the piety, all the care we must have, consists in these three points, which contain the foundatis on of all the reft; to tend towards God continually, to continue in the order and conduct of God, and to entertain all the divine operation; to let God act, who conducts usin that order he hath established over us, and operates in us inceffantly the works which he prepared from all eternity ... In thefe three points, confifteth all the perfection of the life and actions of Christianity. Therefore we must doider



must take great aire herein, though they are unknown to us, and their we appear difficult, yet we must endeavour to know them, and demand of God light and grace; we must follow them with follow, and embrace them with vigiliney in all things, even in the very leaft, for in what concerns God, his glory and will, nothing is little, all is preat and inestimable. Here we must confider how we may be deceived in a fubjett to important, that we may avoid the faires prepared for us on all fides. All the evil that can be fall us berein, comes either from the Devill or from our feloes, and more from our feloes then from the other, for we are the principall inframents of our own raine. The Devill incited by his ardinary analise, being crafty, and having a thousand fabile wayer to annoy us, continually confiders the wayer of God, over our fouls, and by the little knowledge he hath thereof, can exfily represent something of Gods Ordinance over is, of his defigues and wayes to fee w. Having confidered thefe, he goeth about, he makes it his perpetuall bu fine fr to perfecute us, and precipitate us. The first effect of his milite is to ruine in us the work of God, and to thut our heart against the motions of grace; he particularly labours so divert us from the Ordinances of God, and to make us go out of the order and conduct Litera which

which he knowes God hath established over thenhis treachery; he makes ofe of our felver; of all the Crammer, which are as the wife man faves, foures for the feet of fools, he offers us pleafare. In brief, his malite omits nothing that he can make use of to ruine us. To those fouls that have a little defre of good; some fear of God, and who have made fome progress in versus, he redoubles this correments. month and concealing his win, does not represent to them either fin, the World or please fire for that would advantage him nothing. but he propoles change, he gives them divers affire , he inflames their healts with fervour, and trasported Decisions, he inspires them with other actions with other exercises, with foine other manner of living, which in appearance, carry's fome great perfection, but look d into narrowly all their motion and manners will prove to be nothing but deceit, and that the Devill ftrives but to engage the foul in a labyrineh and diforder. Those who ordinarily confern to this temptation, we find to be raft, inconftant, and cafily drawn afide to quir their vocation, felf-wil'd, adhears ing much to their own judgement, disturbed in spirit, unquier; in brief, thep are full of perpenual actuations, the marks and effects of a malignant spirit and rempention, als and By

By the feeffelt, we know that the Devill with all his subtleties, onely seeks to separate the foul from God and from the peace of the first, and to draw it from the order and conduct of God, that he might lead it as he would, knowing the feel being out of the order and conduct of God, is in dangerd and altogether lefeth ber felf, for else for some long time estrangeth herself from God For it is a generall maxime, that we are nothing but what we are in God; and that going out of the order and conduct of God, we cannot burfall into evident danger, and pernicious diforder And therefore one of the greatest cares the foul must have, is to beware of these ferret erafte of the Devill to keep her fold in the conduct and order of God in what condition of whattion foever the bo. For as the Devill labours onely to separate us from God our end and perfection, feeking continually to ambibilate in us as much as may be the works of grace; and to draw us from the order of God, to must we be wery vigilant to please God, to receive the effects of his graces his divine operation, and to live in the order of God b laccording to our vecation and effate in a surregion away indicate or inches que

Not onely the Devill deceives us, and leparates us from God, but also the leve of our own selves, and our own Inclinations. This

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feed of fin which remains in us, is the principall Authour of our barm, and that which most violently drawes us from the order of God. The experience is but too ordinary, the read for evident; for the order that we ought to follow, is an order of grace, that advances us above our selves to God. Self-love depresseth man, and converts him wholly to himfelf, the order of God conducts him to unity, for God is unity: Self-love leads us into a Labyrinth; the works of God are alwayes pure, holy, and perfect, for God is alwayes like to himfelf, he operates in us purity and fandity, for he bath chosen us that we should be holy and Eph. 1.4: without blame before him, in love, faith Saint Paul.

The love of our felves, destroyes the work of God, instills nothing into us but impurity and imperfection. By this love, Adam went out of the order of God, and forfeited the grace which God had given him. We do the same and worse, for by sin we are enclin'd to our selves and the Creature, we are brought to take that in our felves, and in the Creature, which we ought to take onely in God. Our pleasure, repose, abundance and all other good that we are capable of, which we ought to feek in God, and receive at his hands, we feek in our felves, and in the Creatures, separating our selves from God, who is OH

our end, we draw our selves from his conduct, we annihilate in our felves all his divine communications and operations of grace, to turn to our selves and the Creatures. Grace and all the motions of God have no effect in our fouls but to unite us to God, to draw us from our felves, and to feparate us from all the Creatures, that we might no more love or regard them then according to God, and as much as they are in God. And the operation of God in us, drawes us fo to God, as it makes us leave and hate, as much as is needfull, both our selves and the Creatures, fo that we regard them not, but as they are Gods, and use them not but as if we had forsaken them, according to our Saviour's words, If any man come to me, and bateth not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Bretbren and Sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple.

Luke 14.

CHAP. VI.

What the Directors of fouls ought to be.

Rom all that we have faid, may be drawn two very confiderable documents for those that seek their salvation. The first, that we must not willingly fill the soul with a mul-

multiplicity of defines, nor feek to do fomes times one thing, sometimes another, for all that is well, and all that is good, is not proper to every person, and although it seem good, yet is it not alwayes defirable. Some will fay, we must have prudence to make choice, but we must express our selves more christianly or clearly, and fay, that when any good is prefented us to practife, we must life up our eyes to Heaven, and demand of God, that he would be pleased to let us know what we should do, for to speak properly, there is not any good which is pleafing unto God, further then in that he takes pleafure that we should do his will, and fuffer him to act, and that we per levere in the order whereto he hath predestind as. The Christian therefore who would affure his falvation, must be disposit fed to do all forts of good works. His heart must be open to God, to receive all divine operations and holy communications ; but when it is question'd to fettle him in the one exercife or the other, he must regard that which is conformable to his vocation, and above all, confider what is confonant to the state of Christianity, for he must more fatisfie and regard himfelf as a Christian, then as a Gentleman, or Merchant, &c. he must offer himself to God, and do his will, and finally receive the motions God shall operate in his fool, and

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accordingly feek alwayes the glory of God, never minding his own particular advantage.

And in as much as great difficulties ordinarily happen herein, we take for a second document the necessity we have to ask counsel, and to take a Director, for this is an affair of very great consequence, seeing it acts towards the falvation of the foul. And the chief of this affair confifts in conducting Christians in the wayes which God hath established to advance them to perfection worthy of the purity and fanctity of Christianity, and which may render them worthy of God, and capable to enter into the glory that God hath prepared for them to all eternity.

This conduct must not be indifferent, but the fame with that of God. The Director must not guide after one manner, and God after another; for so the poor foul were lost, or tyranniz'd over. He that giveth counsel, must take heed that the matter he treats of have an immediate respect to the order and defigns of God over our souls, and confider that he is upon either the ruine, or establishment of grace and works of God, a point of great consequence, which makes us see what they ought to be whom God hath eftablished in so bigh an office, and who enter into

to facred a ministry.

He that will conduct and counfel a foul, .. must know the designes and conduct of God over this foul; he must consider the order God keeps to govern it, that it is great and hidden in God, that it is a fecret to us, and that the foul cannot without much difficulty know it. It is necessary that he who conducts and counsells, be full of grace and light, that he strongly adhere to God, who is the Father of lights; otherwise, what knowledge or experience soever he may have he will be deceived in the conduct. The more he shall be able and experienced, the more he shall be in hazard to deceive fouls; for though knowledge and experience be necessary, yet must we not confide therein, much less prefume thereupon; for God abhors the prefumptuous, and forfakes those who are overconfident of themselves. In the conduct of souls, there must always be new fuccours from heaven, and new lights. He who would conduct or counsell another in that which concerns his conscience, must remember himself, that he is an Instrument of God, that he must not, either counsel or act in this foul, but what Godwill establish therein.

Moreover, he that conducts a foul, and who giveth counsel, must consider, that in truth and in conscience, he ought to have no other intention or defire, then to follow the very

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very truth, to establish the Kingdom of God in the foul, to lead the foul to God, and to do in that foul, the work of God, according to the intention of God, and to establish nothing therein but what God will. For which reafin he is obliged to labour much to the end that he may annihilate in the foul of any Christian whatsoever hinders the work of God, and kingdom of grace; and for his part, he must have a right intention and pure regard of God, not respecting or defiring any thing but his glory, feeking neither honour nor efteem, favour, nor advantage of those whom he conducts. And truly, if we confider what it is to conduct a foul in the defign of God, and to conserve it in the order which God hath appointed it from all eternity, we shall fee that it is no indifferent bufines, but the most proble and most important of all, and that we must apply our felves thereto, with exceeding great charity, with purity of intentions, and a zeal to Gods glory; for it is for this that principally they who conduct shall render an account.

Hence proceed the evil which falls out when those who conduct, lead and counsel souts negligently and with indifference, without endeavouring to find out what God requires of them, in what state or condition soever they be, and without troubling themselves

to establish therein the Kingdom of God, and of his grace; and we fee in what danger fouls are, when they conduct them according to their own fense, or lead them by those wayes, give them the same exercises, form them by their own spirit, and which is worse, mold them to their own humour. We must proceed quite otherwise, for fouls have different wayes, and are called to divers flates of graces, as they are predestinated to divers degrees of glory; and confequently he must conduct them according to the designes of God, which he must endeavour to know, and according to their vocation, and he must comport himself in the conduct of evety foul in the fame manner, as if he did know from point to point the decrees which the eternall wisdom hath formed upon this foul, and all the particular wayes whereby God leads them. on holeck no ment above all-

To know things fo fecret and so hidden, it is needfull to have the spirit of God, to use much prayer, and to have a great purity of intention: For he who takes upon him the conduct of souls, and will counsel and direct the consciences of men, must take heed that he follow not his own spirit, that he think not of his own interests, that he seek not his own satisfaction, and suffer not himself to be carried away with complacency

placency and naturall motions and inclination; For in fuch a case, he may be affured, that it is no longer God that conducto the foul nor the Spirit of God that governs it, but it is the first of man, and by this manner of conduct he shall not establish the grace or kingdom of God, but the flesh, the kingdom of fin. He who conducts, holds the place of God, both in the foul, and in the conduct; To that this were to do great wrong to the grace, power and Majesty of God. If we say there is danger in the foul that conducts it felf, that follows her oron foirit, self-love, inclinations, humour and will, which Saint Paul calls the defire of the flesh; we must also affirm that the danger is greater, when he who conducts fuffers him-Telf to be carried away with his own inclinations, and onely follows his own will and spirit. And if the Christian be obliged, as we have shewed, to feek nothing in all his actione but to please Gad; if he must have a particular vigilancy to establish the Kingdom of God in his foul to cooperate with his mork, and to remain in the order wherein he conducts him; with far greater reason, he who conducts a Christian soul in any profession or condifame purity of intention, and regard of God, which he ought often to confider.

From all these truths we may easily com-

Eph. 2.3.

prehend how much they are deceived, who are guided by their own nature, according to the inclinations and motions of their own spirit, without confidering what Jesus Christ demands of them, without any regard of the grace that God presents unto them, yea, without taking heed to the state whereto God hath called them. As likewife their error who can bear nothing but what is pleafing to them, nor agree with any but those that flatter them, and fuffer them to live at their own pleasure, and who best accommodate them to their inclinations, defires, humours, and fuch things, which are but too too ordinary. All this is dangerous, and an evident mark that fuch fouls feek not God, nor true vertue; but the satisfaction of their own spirit. You shall find their hearts void of God, full of felflove; their actions inconstant, their thoughts in continual changings. In fine, they are nothing but difquiets, complaints and murmusings. Look upon their life and actions, it is but a pastime, unprofitableness, and the vanities of the age; and having confidered it all, it will not be hard for you to know whether those fouls have the fear of God and the knowledge of vertue, yet in appearance they make a great flew, & we know not whether is to blame those who are conducted and direded or the Directors. But how ever it be, the fame

the Christian, who would be faved, must labour herein feriously, and neither fear pains nor mortifications, but feek to be conducted by the wayes that God hath ordained, and paffing above all confiderations, and all forts of difficulties prove constant and complyant with the order that God hath established over him, he must every day renew his good refolutions, and pray to God to let him know and be acquainted with the designes he hath upon him, and give him grace in every point to follow them, and with fidelity to accomplish them. And seeing that his fidelity is now in question, and that it is altogether neceffary to all Christians, it were but necessary we made some discourse of it.

CHAP. VII.

Of the fidelity of the foul, and of its necessity in the wayes of grace, and the actions of a Christian.

To speak of Fidelity, and to see how much it is necessary to all Christians, we must rested upon the truths already proposed, and remember that man was created for God who is his end, that God alone can conduct him to this end, and that it is the same

fame God who onely operates in him all the good works which are necessary to make him Gods, and to arrive at this end which is God. From these principles of truth, we enter into our subject, and presently see, that we have not any thing more important in this World, then to go to God, to co-operate with the works which God does in us to fave us, and to accomplish with fidelity, that which he requires of us, and in the Spirit and disposition that he defires, every one applying himfelf faithfully to the way that God proposes, and the works of his vocation, that the Priest live according to the perfection of his effate, the Christian as Christian, in brief, that all men live fo as at the boure of death they may fay with Jesus Christ, My Father, I have glorified thee upon the Earth, I have finish'd the work thou haft ordained me to do.

This fidelity which is absolutely necessary, must be in our soul from the time we were born. Though there were neither Heaven nor Hell, we are obliged to live according to the will of our Creator, what aversness soever the creature may have, it shall be all-wayes subject to the order of God, either in the way of justice or mercy. If we would be saved, it cannot be, unless we co-operate with the works that God will do in us, unless we become faithfull to his graces, and follow the

the order that God hath prescrib'd, wherein he will conduct us to falvation, and therefore it concerns us more then we think, to take heed to the designes that God hath over us, and to the vosation whereto he hath called us, to the motions and inspirations he gives us, to make use with fidelity of the graces he offers, leaft drawing our selves from the order and offer of his mercy, we enter into that of his Justice, and one day he say to us in the rigour of his determined Decree, as he faid to his people, I will choose their delusions, and bring their feares upon them, because when I called, none did answer, when I spake, they did not hear, but they did evill in my fight, and chose that in which I delighted not. Isa. 66.4.

When we speak of the vocation and use we are to make of the graces and benefits of God we speak of Paradife; to despife them, is to neglect falvation. Therefore the Chriflian must consider what he does, as well in that which concerns the vocation he must choose, as in the use of the graces and fapours he receives of God, feeing thereon depends all his happiness or misery; we must take heed we chuse not what God mould not have us, nor despise what he would have us

to embrace.

This point is the most important of all in a Christian life, yet is it a mystery the most secretof any in Christianity. The vocation of a foul is as much hidden as her election, which none can know or eafily difcern by her condutt. The wayer of God are as much elevated above ours, as Heaven above Earth, and yet (O wonderfull!) God wills that we follow his mayes, and none shall be faved, but according to the vocation whereto God from all time hath called him. What remedy? feeing on the one fide necessity constrains us, and on the other the incertainty and obscurity deters us. O just God, God of all bounty, who shall enlighten us in this darkness? who shall resolve us in an affaire so doubtfull? who shall affure us amidft so many doubts? nothing but thy light O God, the onely refuge of our fouls can conduct us, nothing but thy fpirit can teach us, but thy truth can affure us, and but thy infinite mercy can protect us. I noo bear while

This lets us see in what danger they put themselves, who so long neglect the motions, graces and favours of God, and make such ill use of his benefits. From these truths we learn the esteem we ought to have of our vocation, and with what circums pedion we must make choice thereof, and if we will make our selves worthy to receive of God the light and conduct necessary in an affaire of so great consequence for our salvation, it will be very

profitable to enter into these following

diffesitions.

First, The Christian must have a pure defire of God, and a resolution to do in every thing his divine will, being from the bottom of his Heart wholly refigned to his will and conduct.

Secondly, He must have a great sence of his meakness, he must be in an estate of humility before God, not esteeming himself morthy or capable of any thing; for the humble shall never perish, and, as Esay saith, God looketh to him that is poor, and of a concrite spin

rit, and trembleth at his word.

Thirdly, He must renounce his own interests, and all his particular concernments, he must not regard his own safety, that he may have no object but the pure will of God, yet in such manner, that he who resolves to remain so faithfully and constantly in the order and designes of God, and proposes to make hereafter use of Gods gifts, graves and benefits, and regards not perfection, advancement, vertue, not Heaven it self, must not content himself with a thought to please God, (for alas, who is worthy thereof) but cleaning and parifying his intentions, thoughts and despositions, he must onely regard God, and have a desire to be in the accomplishment of the will of God in him, without having other interest

or intention then the good pleasure of God. In this disposition which is pure and Christian, the soul will never fail to feel the help of her God, for those who seek God with purity of

beart shall be worthy to possefs him.

In fine, we must pray to God continually, and in an affaire so important as is sidelity to grace, and the employment of our life, we must demand of God, and that instantly, his light to know what he would of us, his grace to accomplish it, his mercy and particular assistance to persevere in it, for he alone, who perseveres to the end, shall be saved, and we know that without the favour and assistance of God,

we can do nothing.

After this, the Christian who will proceed further, and live Christianly, must be very vigilant to root up, take away, and annihilate all that may alienate him from God, and draw him from his divine conduct. He must alwayes have a watchfull regard of God, to make use with purity and sidelity of the graces and gifts he receives of him. I say sidelity, not one or other, but according to the amplitude and state of grace that God communicates to him, and with purity of love and esteem of God. For we are obliged not onely to be faithfull to grace, but also to the manner of grace, and to the extent of the operation of God in us. So that our sidelity and co-opera-

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Prov.I.

Mat. 25.

Luke 9

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tion must be correspondent and proportio nable to the designes of God. We may fail in fidelity, and deftroy the work of God in us three wayes; in absolutely refusing the grace God offers, as when he faid, I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; or being unfaithfull, represfing all the grace we have of God like him in the Parable, who hid his Mafters Talent under ground; or laftly, we are unfaithful, not running out all the race of God, but onely a part, straying from him to apply our felves to our felves or the Creature, like him who Mat. 8 21. defired he might take leave of his friends at home, and fee them before he followed Christ. These three states of insidelities, God Pro. 1. 36. feverely punishes. He abandons the first, and leaves them to their own conduct and counfels; protesting that he will mock them in the day of their affliction, that is, of their death. From the second, he takes away the Talent, and Mat 25. throwes them from before his face, confines them to that place of darkness, whereof the ¥. 30. boly Scripture makes mention, a place full of horrour and lamentation. Of the third, Christ faith, no man having put his hand to the Plough, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God. Whence we may learn, how much

the Christian must suffer, who leads a life which we call common, who endeavours

onely to recreate himself, to deceive the time, and hath no sare or leafure to confider what he does, or what may befall him for the small esteem he makes of God and his praces. He is affured that fuch foils must apprehend some great evill, for robosoe-Mat. 131 ver hath, to him shall be given, and be shall 12. bave more abundance, but who foever Hath not, from him, thall be taken away even that he hath. Thefe words thew the wrath of God to Christians, who make so little account of his Love, and receive his graves fo indifferently, who, as the Apostle faith, count the blood of the Covenant wherewith they Heb io. were fand fied, an unboly thing, and have 19. done despight unto the spirit of grace; words that shew the need we have to be faithfull to God, and what a high crime it is to injure in us the first of God, to destroy his works, to annihilate his graces, and to prophane his gifts and benefits. wifts and oferetions

"... God by his late, operations, and prace pives mindely to us, and policingh us; he will that we be wholly his as hers outs, he is make and lives in an income when his we make his

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CHAP, VIII.

Of Infidelity to grace, and how a man ought to live in his Vocation.

He confideration of this great epil, which draws along with it the peril of our foul, obliges us to find out by what may, and after what manner we come to ruine, and extinguish the operations of God in us, and what the principall subject or object is that canfes us to refuse his grace, and deshife his love, who loves us more then his own life, feeing that Infidelity to the graces of God, is the enely evil of our foul; this must be a point of which we ought to edvise: hereunto we must apply the greatest vigilancy of our life. Tounderstand so necessary a Doctrine, we are onely to confider grace in it's effence, and regard what God intends to do in us by his gifts and operations: we have spoken of it elsewhere, but we will briefly repeat it upon the present subject.

God by his love, operations, and grace gives himself to us, and possesseth us; he wills that we be wholly his as he is ours, he is in us, and lives in us, that we may live in him, and by an excessive bounty, elevates us to the participation of his divine essence, and associates us

to all his divine greatues. For this he created as, and hath given us the capacity to love him, and in loving him, to possess him s and all that he doth in us, all the graces that he gives, are to no other end, but to accomplish all this in us. This therefore being granted, we shall find, that all the motions of grace and operations of God must produce two things in us; one to draw us from our selves, and separate us from the creature; the other, to draw us to God, to give us to God, and to make us one with him.

Behold in few words, the being of grace, and defigns of God. This being confidered, it will be easie for us to see and know that we annibilate the graces of God and his works, when we remain to our selves, and adhere to our felves, and embrace the creature's for in this doctrine of piety, we must say, that as grace separates us from our selves and the creatures, and unites us onely to God, fo we Separate our selves from God, and destroy his work when we are our felves, and adhere to the creature, and consequently we are less Gods, the more we are our own; fo that to ruine the work of God, and annihilate his grace, is nothing elfe, but to be our felves, to adhere to the creature, to follow our own inclinations; in a word, to love our felves. This is a powerfull truth, which should beget in our bearts.

bearts hate and borror of our felves, and detestation of all creatures, seeing the only cause of our loss and love of our selves is the onely Instrument of our ruine. This truth we should have alwayes before our eye, to put us in mind of the danger it is to follow our own appetites, inclinations and wills, to adhere to the complacency, esteem, and love of the creature. For it is certain, the more we love our felves, the more we are divided from God; the more we follow our own wills and inclinations, and adhere to the creature, the more we destroy in us the works of God, and annihilate his gifts and graces. This is an evil that cannot be fufficiently deplored, fince that for the regard of the creature, we lose the regard of God, to love a thing of nothing, we ruine in us the love of God, and for a wretched and miserable thing like our selves, the broad of fin, and the food of death, we destroy in us the works of God, and the effects of his love. Briefly, to adhere to our own wills, inclinanations and fentiments (Oh who can speak it without a torrent of tears?) we separate our felves from God, and draw our felves from the order and designes of the eternall wisdom. Truly we ought to weep, and weep tears of blood, when we confider the weak condition on of man. What? this Man, who is capable of God, who hath right to possess God

and to be by grace what God is by nature, immortall, eternall, perfect, and to possess an entire and eternall rest, and a fulness of all good, a true folid and permanent good, for him I fay, (O misfortune of humane nature, and weakness of our spirits!) to renounce all his happines, and lose his God, and in him all things, to follow his own disorder dinclinations, to do his own corrupt will, and to please and adhere to the creature, which is nothing but vanity, to enjoy a fleeting transitory good. He must neither have heart nor faith, that cannot grieve at this our blindness, nor apprehend an evil so common and deplorable; he must be more obstinate then Pharao, that would not draw his foul out of this darkness, and deliver it out of this captivity, to fet it at liberty, to go to serve and adore the true God, and quit the Leeks and Onions of Egypt: O that I had wings Plal. 55. like a Dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest; lo, then would I get me away afar off, and remain in the wilderness. O Jesus, who art our Deliverer, break these bonds that bind us, and permit not the weakness of our wills, and malice of our spirits, to oppose the power of thy grace. My Jesus, the only light of our souls, who camest into the world to enlighten those that walk in the shadow of death, come and defer no longer to give life and liberty to those whom thou haft chosen to be thy children.

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But

But let us put a ftop to our zeal and notibe transported with the motions and resentments of this just grief. Let us rather remedy the evil, and fee what we must do to be faithfull to God, and to do that which he would have us. First, the Christian must take his vocation of God, and not of men ; for as we have formerly faid, God only hath power to ordain all things, and it is the greatest mark of his Omnipotency for himself to choose and ordain the lives and actions of all men, and principally to give to his Elect, and to propose to them the way and light whereby he will perfect them in the state of grace, and conduct them to the enjoyment of the glory he hath prepared for them. So faid Jejus Christ to his 19.15.16. Apostles and Disciples, Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; shewing it is he alone that calleth us, and employs us in the actions for which we were created.

When therefore the Christan is at the point to make choice of his vocation, he must ask it of God, and regard only God in his desire, and to render him capable of so important a grace, he must make an entire & true resignation and annihilation of his will, and of the use of his liberty, and neither have choice of liberty or will in any thing that concerns him, as

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having no will but that of God, leaving to God alone the power and care to cheefe, ordain and establish all according to his boly wil, corfidering nothing therein but the pure glory of God, and referving a defire to accomplish what God by his good pleasure hath ordained him, proposing to do all that he should know to be the will of God.

Secondly, when the Christian is in a settled estate and profession, then he must live according to the fpirit and grace of his estate and vocation, and apply himself wholly to God in the use and mayes proportioned to his estate, wherein confifts the ground of the fouls fidelity. To comprehend this advice, we must know that in the life of every one, there are confiderable two estates; one generall, which is common to all the state of Christianity; the other particular, which confifts in the condition he professes in the world. The perfect Christian, who would be faithfull to God, must first have a care to agree with the state and grace of Christianity, the most noble of all professions of men, and the ground whereon we must of necessity raise the whole edifice of Perfection, in what condition foever a man be. For what is a man the better for being a perfect and an accomplish'd Gentleman, and a wicked Christian? to what end serves it to be excellent in some condition and estate?

to feem good in some vocation? to be esteemed of men, and to fatisfie ones own conscience, if in truth, and before God he be not perfect in the flate of Christianity? He must then be a. perfect Christian before he seek or think to be perfect in any other condition or estate. And therefore the first thing he ought to do, who would be faithfull to God, must be to live, according to the Laws, maxims, and according to the grate of Christianity, in such a manner, that he may strive to accomplish and become faithfull in all that is taught and required in this estate, with fuch purity and fincerity, that he neglect nothing, but make account of all that is in Christianity. For, as we Tay, there is nothing little in Religion, but all in it is great, all is here to be esteemed, and all is here of importance to him who will live perfectly in such an estate: so in the state of Christiany, we must esteem all; and he that will be a perfect Christian, must make account of all that is proposed in Christianity, when he is in this estate, he must study to perfect himself in the particular profession he takes upon himfelf, be it in the world, or out of the condition of seculars.

Thirdly, the foul seeing her self in a profession and vocation, must wholly apply her self thereto, so as if there were no other, and although she esteem of all other vocations, of all the wayes whereby God guides his Church and Christians, yet must she onely apply her felf to her vocation, and step onely in the way and conduct of God, being without tafte and voluntary knowledge of all others, as not being willing to make use of any way, but this that God hath ordained for her, whereto she is called. By this practife, the foul remains in her unity of application, and begins to be in the perfect adherence of the Spirit of God. To live faithfully in those wayes wherein the believes God will conduct her, the will be carefull to employ all her power to destroy and annihilate her felf into God in those wayes wherein he governs her, without thinking of any other, resigning her self wholly to God, that he by his divine power, secretly and intimately operate in her a true annihilation, which separating her from her self, and all things, shall per-fest her, and put her into a capacity of God, that is, shall render her worthy and capable to bear God, and be filled with him, who from thenceforth will be all in all in her by grace and love, (which is the condition of the Saints in the state of glory) yet after a manner proportioned to the baseness of earth. The Christian living in this faithfull application, shall not want the favour of God, and motions to draw him more and more to God, God, and to make him perfect. Let us now fee how he must comport himself in the exteriour use of all things.

CHAP. IX.

How the Christian ought to comport himself in the exteriour use of all things.

It is a point of great consequence in the life of a Christian, to take heed to the use and seeking after of exteriour things, for besides that he must shun as Hell whatsoever is of sin, and abstain from all that displeases God, it is also necessary to see how he comports himself in exteriour things, though lawfull. Every employment out of God diverts us from him, if we be not ready and formed in the exercise of true piety, and conducted by the spirit of truth. All things are lawfull, but all things are not expedient, saith St. Paul, signifying that all that is lawfull is not alwayes good to do, and that for divers circumstances, a man must retain and deprive himself of that which is permitted.

In the use and acquisition of exteriour things, even of those that appear lawfull, we may fail in divers manners, for the employment diverts us from God, the use and possession

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brings care upon us, and the adhering to them divides us from our felves, and makes us divide them with God, and as it is in the Parable Matth. 23, many refuse to go to the Marriage, and to the heavenly Banquet whereto they are invited, that is, they refuse the graces and Heaven it felf, because they turn themselves to the Creature. Some, faith Jesus Christ, go to their possessions and forms, others employ Luke 14. themselves in their affaires, some to buy, others to fell, and bufying themfelves in thefe occupations, think no more of Heaven, or, if they have thoughts or defires of it, they are ftifled in the confusion of affaires. So that if God offer them graces, and cause them to feel good motions, either they refuse them, or think not feriously of them. Thus they extinguish in themselves the resentments of their salvation, the esteem of God, and by little and little, make themselves insensible of the graces and favours of Heaven. This evill is whereinto they fall in employing themselves too much in things which appear lawfull, and whereof they have not any fear. But the Son of God adds thefe dreadful. and menacing words, that none of those men which were bidden; Shall tafte of my Supper ; V. 24 words worthy to be weighed, and examined by Christians, which make us to know fufficiently, what circumfrection we must have in the

the use and exercise of exteriour things, seeing they are capable to make us lose, and neg-

lect his graces and vocation.

There is no example more clearer to demonstrate this truth, then the fall of Lucifer and Adam, who fell from the heighth of perfection and grace, to turn to themselves and the Creature; and because they had a will to contemplate and employ themselves in their own perfection, they were withdrawn from beholding God, and loft themselves in searching into themselves, and in the Creature, that which they ought to lay hold of, and feek in God alone. And to this day, fin is committed onely, because the foul is diverted from God, and converted to the Creature, and seeks in the Creature for her own particular interest and satisfaction, what she ought to feek onely in God and for God.

Hence we may easily conjecture the hazards which happen, and the failings which they commit, in the use and research of the Creatures, and for as much as it is the snare wherein all souls are intrapped, it is necessary to beware of it, and cause all men to see it. See then in particulars, how a man ought

to comport himself.

First, The Christian who will live perfectly in any estate or profession, must have a care above all things, to do nothing that may displease

please God, for this motive is the touchstone of true perfection, the foundation and principle of folid vertue, and confequently, absolutely neceffary for a Christian. For if, as we have elsewhere said, he must do all for the good pleasure of God, he must also by the same consequence, take heed of doing any thing against the pleasure of God. In this advice, there are two things to be confidered, very important to Christian Piety, one when it is faid we must have a care to do nothing, fin nor any thing which displeaseth God; in these words, we must learn, that this care is absolutely necessary, so necessary, that it is the onely care wherein a Christian ought to live. For the foul which must do nothing to displease God, and detefts all that may displease him, shall never fail to be acceptable to his divine eyes, who contemplating her in this purity, will love her, loving her will possess her, poffesting her will inrich her with his gifts and graces, according to his divine will and designes. Therefore in the acquisition of true and folid piety, we must not study so much to do as to take away, nor labour fo much to acquire and act, as to devest our selves, and do nothing difpleasing to God.

The other point is, when we fay that we must do nothing to displease God; by this advice, we shew what the duty of the foul is,

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that will live in Christian purity, which confifterh in that she is obliged to regard God, and the good pleasure of God in all her allions. The reason of this duty is grounded in that we are not for our selves, neither our life nor actions, but we are for God, by confequence we must employ our life, actions, and selves for God. For this reason, God demands an account, even to the least moment of our time, unto the least thought of our heart, the flightest word of our tongue, and to the smallest action of our life. In brief, he will demand an account of our felves from our felves, because that we being not our own but Gods, we must employ our selves all for God, for his good pleasure and glory. He that will examine the precept of love, will ingeniously confess that which we say, for we cannot love God with all our heart, with all our joul, and withall our strength, but in feeking to please him in all things, even the least, much more in those which we call indifferent, though in truth they are not fo, as we shall thew hereafter.

Secondly, The Christian must avoid in his actions, the multiplicity and confusion which occurs ordinarily in affaires, even in those which are good and appear charitable, and above all, he must exempt himself from that which concerns him not, and is not of his

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office, nor suitable to his profession and vocation, and especially those which are above his capacity and power. This advice is to be weighed and cleared, for the most ferious may be deceived, and the most zealous may lose themselves in their occupations; by this way the Devill withdrawes away many fouls from vertue and the purity of their vocation. It is easie for us to be lost in this snare, if we have not a pure regard of God, and a continual vigilancy, we fall ordinarily into this evill. Sometimes a false zeal of charity transports us, sometimes we are seduced by complacency, sometimes by suriofity and our own inclination, which is much given to change and variety, and takes pleasure in all that it employes it self in, busies it self therein with much content, fastens it self thereto, infomuch, that the few becomes at last so disordered that she finds no more repose in her spirit, no more attention in her felf, but feels her felf wholly estranged from God, even in the most boly exercises of her vocation. Being in this condition, the is difquieted, and this difquiet causes a distaste and alienation from vertue, whereupon losing the reins, the more and more abandons her felf to exteriour things, and infallibly loseth her felf, if the have not a care to withdraw her felf in good time, and if God preferve her not,

not, and behold her with the eye of mercy. The foul therefore that feeks perfection, and the inward peace of the heart, must be vigilant herein, and not suffer her self to be inconsiderately transported under any pretence whatfoever, for it concerns her falvation.

The state of true love and grace, alwayes withdrawes the foul from all multiplicity, and separates her from all things; for so much as the hath of love and grace, fo far is the feparated and estranged from the Creature, and the more she is to God, the more she flyes and detefts all things elfe; the more grace raigns in her, the more it separates her from her felf and the world. Self-love drawes us to the Creature, and involves us in a multiplicity; on the contrary, the love of God separates us from the Creature, and puts us into unity. This most true principle, may serve us as a plummet to found the depth and interiour of the foul, He who is subject to grace, and hath but any pure love, needs not to be perfwaded to this, because the love of God and grace, makes him hate, fly, and deteft both the World and the affaires of it, and affuredly, he will shew it by the effects, for he cannot do otherwise. Whence it will be hard to approve the opinion of those, who would be truly devout, and perfwade themselves they have have true Christian pitty; yet charge them

felves with cares, with affaires and symble orplexing themselves in thoughts, define and bringing about divers designeous Tolicons wince and enlighen them if they be capable we must refurne our privately and thely fay to them that the loos of Godspeaks units and officer to their ximilation is what we formed and Conto Ploose moists yang are many action necole or no fary in many affaires where with we cannon dispense for that theyoare necessary, and wherein our nature and privit may be fatisfie bdandcontent But ove mulbrendunke this pleasure and wentent, dot God much live all our actions and to do Christianly and purely, we mult do it onely for he good pleafind, blo that if wainingle with it other pretences or contentments be is not projety for God but we share with God and we robhim of all that that that we rake therein. But if the bations we do be waterall, as to est a fleep nauditha like waithis nor fulfill them by the wifinet and appeare of natures which forces us to day tisfie both honned flity and phrafared but we must perform them out of a pure defir the de the mill of God, which abligeth us to this mes deffity; this define mult be axclisher, sastbase ny other institute and will a for in actions nagurall and necessary, there is great diffe-Hence between the rule and end of the attion. the The

THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE The rub is humane and apparall, the end must alwayes be futernaturall, as for example. We do fome necessary ast, as to eac, fleep, or the like, the necessary is the rule, but God must be the end of this attion, for he is the end of all the advises of man, both for and meeffry and we are obliged to direct all our con to vice of St. Paul; Whether ye dut or drinks or mbat bever ye do, tes all be done to the glory of God. This truck is most evident; the if God were not the end of fuch actions, it must no collective be, that man himfelf is the end thereon which would be a kind of Idelery and or our to affirm. We must they conclude and fay with the Apostle, Whatforder ye do in word or deed, do alt in the name of the Lord Jefine, giving chanks to God and the Rather by him. In all lawfull actions, therefore we must regard the rule and the end of neverfley, which multibe no other then the good pleafore and pure will of God. But if in the le action their should happen fome displacine, as if they should be southery to our transit, or if they be full of bittemely, then we must coungit outly embrace them, and with an effective and love ready for the displeasure which might happen, offering our felves to Godyo

be filled with bimanefi, as often and as long as it shall please his dione Majeffy: 80 in all

Col. 3. 17.

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the ashious of man wherein he may take pleasing or displeasare, in what manner locker they are, we may traine three ash. The first is an act of chedience, making such an action very naturall and necessary by submission and obedience to the pure well of God, who hath ondrined all things after the best manner that best pleaseth him. The second is of abnegation, renouncing the pleasure, or accepting the displeasing which may be therein. The third of resignation, giving our selves up to the mill of God, to be in a continual substitute of displeasine, if it shall so happen, and that for as long, and in what manner it shall please God. For the soul must have no mill but to accept the mill of God.

Enerthly, we may tail, yet in the we and refearch of things, not onely lawfull, but also persons by adhetence and inclination there to. It is a fault ordinary enough, and which we must avoid because our footmust be free and not tyed but to God onely and to his pure will. For as we ought to do nothing but for God, and by the Spirit of Jesus Chrast, which is the true and onely spirit of Chrast, which is the true and onely spirit of Chrast, and in the property of the spirit of the spirit of chrast, and which they are most inclined to, and thun those they fear, and embrace most willingly

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the occupations and exercises whereto their inchination carrries them. Thus we see some have an inclination to exterior penitence, others to compassion, and some to penance; one is prone to the love of things regulated, another is pleased with folitude, and the like. And we know that ordinarily, every man follows the morions, and most willingly chooses the manner to live according to his inclination. It is a great advantage and gift of God, to have received a good faul, as the Wife man faith; but to embrace the good, and do it's actions, because the inclination or passion carries us thereto, though they be good, this is not to act Christianly; on the contrary, this is to live bruitifbly, for beafts follow their passions; or at best, to all but humanely, when the inclination is conformable to reason. He theres fore that wil do a Christian action, must take a fupernatural principle, which is grace, and neclinations carry him thereto, but onely because it is the will and order of God upon him, and because such actions are acceptable to God. able to God.

Thus he that will live Christianly, must new ver undertake any thing which he believes is not the will of God; if he do any good action, he must do it for God; if he choose a manner of life, he shall regard God onely, and

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strive to do only what is most perfect in him, most conformable to the life and actions of Jesus Christ, and most contrary to his own inclinations and naturall affections. But if he find himself in doubt, or perplexity, and if he defire to judge his actions, his refentments, and intentions, to know if they be good, and truly Christian, then shall he have recourse to Tesus Christ, who is the chief truth and rule of our lives and actions; he shall demand light of him, and taking Jefus Christ for the object of his life, and the truth for his tule, he shall confider whether his intentions and actions be conformable to the truth, whether they be like to those of the Son of God, whether he all in the perfection and purity that Goddemands of him according to his vocation and conformable to the fantity of the estate of Christianity. The Christian living in this man. ner shall become acceptable to God, shall arrive at the perfection which God requires of him, and thall do all his attions with the purity he ought, which is the Principall point of continue We are born in /w fill midiral in folding among trombettions, and thall die win It is the persion of humane life, the male ordinary food of our fouls. It believes THE TO RELEASE WWW make all and feof. He nath made a great progress it verfestion who can inster, and bear

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Oad, and to fuffer, are the two effates of the life of min, and like two Pillars, fustain him. He that will dive per feetly, must know the we of the one as well as the other; as he must ect Christianly, so must be fuffer Christianly, that is, holely, and in a manner, moreby the efface of Christianity, This is that which we have left to examine, and is the last drought of the Picture of a perfect Christian. We have already spoken of his foundation, of his interiour, of the purity of his actions; it remains that we freat now of his fufferings. This is a point which we must look upon as the most effectiall in Christianito for fuffering is the first years which is Christian must expect, and wherein he is to continue. We are born in sufferings, we love in solitude among temptations, and shall die in pain. It is the portion of humane life, the most ordinary food of our fouls. It behooves us therefore to know how to make use and profit thereof. He hath made a great progreß in perfection who can fuffer, and bear couragiously

couragiously all that dan befall him, fuch a bne God owns as a friend! Fire tries gold and floer, but men are tried in the Furnace of hamiliation. Here the fidelity of our foal appears; for the Christian ought to follow Christ as willingly to mount Calvary, as to mount Thater, In brief, here the purity of our attibut and intentions do best appear what we do of our felver, be it in penitence, good worke, or otherwife, is for the most part full of our own spirit, and soil, it follows our inclinations, it is in regard of our febres, and our own Interests proportioned to felf-love, and for the most part concerns our folors. But in all that happens to us, we shall find nothing but God, if we know how to lay hold of him, when he puts forth his hand unto us and hord

To learn fo good and profitable a Doctrine, we must propose these truths for a foundation. Finft, if we confider God, as foon as his wife providence embraced all the morld, his divine eyer surveigh'd all things, his infinite wifelom or dained the whole; and his mildom, fayes the Wife man, stayes in his force from one end to the other, and fiveerly diffrofer all things and he not onely ordains and diffofes wild s. all, but he makes all the good and the evil, life and death, poverty and riches come from God. Now, the marke of God are holy, his will is just, Maria. Y 4

just, his decrees eghingble, his ordinances amis able and above allutings we must adore and feek his good pleafure What remains then; but that we receive all things from the fatherly and loving band of God, that we kiss the hand that strikes, dince it is the hand of God, that we bear with an humble and quiet fubmission all events, be they painful or easie, good or bad, prejudiciall or profitable? and we must entertain them not onely with an equality of spirit; and inward peace, but with respect and essence, asseming from God; nothing being done but by his order ... It is just we should esteem this tonduct as the conduct of God, and subject out selves to it, not onely with patience, but with teffest and honour, for all that comes from God, must be highly esteemed. Souls that live enlightened by faith, and walk with the forrit of truth, hold it a great bonour, and much esteem sufferings, as being the work of God, and the effects of his will, which we ought to honour and effeem, as well in sufferings as in quiet, in privation, as well as fruition, in coit, as in goods for in all, it is the will of God, is will advable, to be esteemed above all the world, a will those worthy then the life and falvation of all mankind. We must not regard the evils and sufferings in themselves, but we must consider them in the mill of Ged; There we shall fee what they

they are, and the eftern that God makes of them fefas Christ wills his Apostler, speaking to them of fufferings, to receive them without fear, and with efteem, and wills, that they be unto them freet and pleasing ; Because, Luke 12.4 faith he, the hairs of your head are numbred, und not one of them Shall fall to the ground without the will of your Father : He faid, that God is our Bather, to engrave in our hearts are spect, confidence, and love; He faves, that our hairs are numbred, and that he keeps an account of them to perswade us, that Gods tore of us is great, and that he hath a core of us, even to the least things. In brief, he faith, that a bair Shall not fall to the ground without his order, to shew that all the loffes, privations, sufferings, all events, loss of goods, of bonour, of life, happen not but by the order of God who is our Father. has sommunition

What greater reason to esteem fufferings, and to conduct our fouls to peace and repose amidft the perplexities of the world, then the affurance of Jefus Christ? It is enough for a Christian (if he be a Christian) when Jesus .. Christ fayes to him, Fear not, for a bair, Shall not fall to the ground without lyour Rather; how full of love and confoldtion are the words Eph. 4.1 of Saint Paul to the Ephefiaher, I beferebyen that you walk murthy the vocation reherentith ye are called : The Reafon he added Therais rhen

Ecclef. 3.

but one Lord, one faith, one Baptisme, one God and Father of all, who is blove all, and through all, and myou all. These words are sufficient to establish us christianly in the spirit of sufficient to establish us christianly in the spirit of sufficient and to make us to bear all with sweet ness, peace and tranquillity of spirit, even with estate and respect. We need no other object for our eyes, nor other thought in our boart, but there is but one Lord, this Lord is God, this God is our Father, this Father is above all. In these words we shall learn in what respect, subjection and esteem we ought to be in all the contrarieties and sufferings of bumane dife.

Secondly, We may look upon the flate of Christianity, and examine what is the effence of the true spirit of piety; we shall find that sufferings is the principall, its life, and its continuance, and its mututenance, My Son, fayes the wife man, going to the fervice of God, keep thy felf just and in fear, and prepare thy food to temptation, adding, Take all that Shall be imposed on thee, fuffer pain with patience and hamility. St. Paul more clearly describes this, when speaking of the persevutions he had fuffered, he adds, And all those also, who will time godly in Sefus Christ , Soull fuffer perferment, which must be understood of all forts of fafferings, both inward and outmard. Por the life of a Christian, is no other then

Ecclef, a.

5 Tim. 3.

then the life of Jefus Christ, the spirit of the spirit of Jefus, or in the common phrase, the print of grace. Jesus was ulwages in humiliation, and jufferings; he Aced from all eternity, feeing that from all elective he was relatived to be many he is reinvested therein becoming man, humiliation and Jufferings were the centre of his life. It fufferings, to lay that Jafus Christ buch burn sheen and as the Christian must be the image of Jojas Christ, to must be bear with Josus chill all forts of commetions, pains, bumiliations and fufferings. As we have born the . Cor. 15. thereby Image of the earthly Adam, let as also 49. bear she image of the heavenly, faith the Apollo, meaning that we must reinvest us with his Portues, that our life may be an express image of his life, which appearing alwayes in de-fertions, lowness and sufferings, so ours must be but the same state of sufferings. What honour is it to a christian to weare the Livery of Jefus chrift? what happiness to follow his steps? we are his members, he is our Head; were it nor's flame to fee the budy decked with flowers, bathed in deligher, and the head crowned with Thorns ? we are his Brethen, and mult police one beritage with him shirt nor reasoff then then we frould be like him, and huntare his sunflict. If we would parri-Alistis. cipate

Rom \$.

cipace of his Triumphs ? We are co-beires mith Jefus Christ, faith the Apostle, if we Juffer with him that we may be also glorified with him. Whatfoever it be, the Sonne of God bath fo ordered it in Christianity, that he that will fol low him, must renounce bimself, and take up his Croffe. They are deceived, who think to atrain true piety with delights, who refuse all forts of pains and mortifications, who take care for peace, repose and health, who one ly study to frame to themselves an easie life; and feek for eafe in their labours, and quiet in their firits, and think thereby to make a great progress in perfection. No no! vertue walks onely amongst the thorn; and amidst the travails of the spirit of flesh, and the viser of the world. She must tame her self by watchings and mortifications and the bapping ness of a Christian is onely in the Cross. It is the Livery of the Children of God, the mark of their election, the Plummer of their fidehey, and the onely may of Heaven; for faith St. Paul, We must enter into the Kingdom of Ged through many tribulations ... 5 ... 5 ...

A& 14.

The third reason is, that the grace of Christianity can operate no other effect then annibilation and suffering, for to be in grace, is to be subject to graces, and to be in the Kingdom of grace, that is to be in the Groffe. For so much as the soul hath of grace; so much she much

must have of the Croff The Fathers of the Church call the life of a perfect Christian, which is easie to come mity confifteth in a crucifying love, a love like that of the feel, who cryes, I charge you & Cant, s. ye Daughters of Jerufulem, if you find my belo. sed, that you tell him, that I am fick of love, love which pierceth the foul, which transports and transforms ivintorits object Jefus; tove which edimbates efifferings; and briumphs over death Behold this combate of lover God loves us, gives us his love, makes us fuffento. prove the furthfulness of our love; the foul that fufferetts because for lovery willingly throwes her felf into fufferings , and defices all labour, that in her fufferings the muy was the prof her love? Jefus did to antherevening of his death, when he went to farifies him felf upon the Altar of the Cropes when he side his Apostles, To the end, the World may know Job. 14. that I love my Father, and do us be bath come 31. manded me, arife and tet us go bence , whence he went to the Garden of Oliver; to deliver himself withingly winto the hands of his enemies where he thewed that the was the coule of his Sufferings, his Suffering that marks of his How How loey or it be roben Christian, and not to love Got cannot stand together, and to love God and not to bffer is impos The fible.

The fore, and the proper grace of the state of Christianity, puts us into this necessians for the first and most inseparable effect of the grace of Christianity, is to diffray in us the old drine of the Apolite, is no other than Refer Christ, and we know that grateming needla-rily destroy our evil intheprent and Jasw Christ will parise and consume after the manner that he pleases, and as much as be with the being and life of Adam, who is it we, there to oftablish a being and a life of God. Now this cannot be but by fufferings, by fakeer flore, and by a lime and painfull death, and therefore the Mafter of Christians faid to the Galatiant; Gat 5.14. Thefe that are of Jeffin Christ bong crucify de the fless, the fine, the pallions and concupitoenfee, thewing that these who are Gods, and in the Kingdom of grace, are cracify'd, and must fiburious And immediately after, be tells us, that we are Christians and Children of God. not onely to live in this effect, but withall, by a mereffity to abfalute, that we may fay, that she who are belonging to feful Christ, are belonging to feful Christ, are belong the base crueifed and mortified their field and passion; more than these who have not mortification; and thereword and more field and passion; and provoid and neglect it, and therefore be-(he

Spinitual Tringlines?

big her to Jefuc Cheift. The conclusion is cantifest in St. Pant, who faid, If any of you Rom. 8.9. have not the spirit of Fefix Christ, be er none of but. Now this phice no other then the forrie of fafferings, fab ver froms, contraricties, oppo-Strong and the Coffe, and therefore he that will be fesus Christs, must resolve to suffery and though he be not oblig'd to demand it of God, yet he must embrace it with esteem, and receive it with love and courage, when it befalls him, for that it is necessary to esta-How the tear of futtering during nirgidalila

Hence we may see what despite in crept into Christians, who making profession of forme meey, instead of profesing tightiffering and receiving them with a feem disvel in greater care then to exempe themelves from them, feeking bothing but the rown hand burner deshent and labouring to historia farisfaction and repolary funding they By all foits of pains and remove themselves as much as they can from all trouble to ite wet for birth, and rehouses and whold all we espations and vectors that chay morning them, and if they cannot help themselves, nor find any remady, then there is nothing but vexation of special much ving in their hearth impations in their words and excessive in their plaints; fulfering themfelves to fall into a dilengrand western of the watchy a Chile 8,8 mox Stian.

bleafe

Spiritual Treasure Part W. 1
frian. To live so as to become we apable rost
any solid vertues is the mark of a bases which

is not Gode, and of a feel which loves but it felf. Let us then hearken to the decree of Jest in the Christ, He that loves be life fool loss it and be that botes his life in this world, Iball keep it unto life eternall. Then, when any selection

of God, ver he must emorage to with elvem, and receive it why layer Hyconeage, when

and though he be not obliged to dentific

it befalls him, for that it is necessary to ellabet and free of fuffering draws and the Hence we may seenoit server of year of

I Aving in describing the way to perfection of the obstacle therein; it will not be necessary to speak farther of it, were it not that the subject of sufficients obligations thereto. Hitherto we have seen flow all that is of Adam, and of the life of Adam, hinders us from pleasing Gold, for man as the Child of Adam, hinders us from pleasing Gold, for man as the Child of Adam, hinders us from pleasing Gold, for man as the Child of Adam, hinders us from pleasing Gold, for man as the Child of Adam, hinders us from pleasing Gold, for man as the Child of Adam, hinders us from pleasing Gold, for man as the Child of Adam, hinders us foll is so deplorable, that he is uncapable of raising himself up to Gold his supernaturall end, if not aided by grace, and if he were not engrafted in Jasas Christ, as the stock into the vine, and lived not his life, which is a life of grace, a life that the Apostle calls the life of the Oritics on they that are in the stelling commit

Rom. \$3. the Spirit, for they that are in the flesh, cannot please

please God, and the works of the flesh are called Heb. 6. 11 in the Scripture, dead works. Now if we contemplate this world in the curse of sin, we shall find that all creatures, have conspired against us, that the aire is full of our enemies, that all things may be the instruments of our ruine, wherefore our obstructions in the way of perfection are infinite, but the greatest are

in us, and of our felves.

One of the greatest is, a fear to suffer pains, an apprehension of Shame and confusion. For commonly, we stand in fear of croffes and travails, felf-love caufing us to shun all that humbles us, making us to fly what ever is low, and hindring us from embracing any thing that is difficult. This fear is a great obstacle to vertue, which cannot be attain'd but by travel, nor prefery'd but by viglancy, nor perfected but in humility and privation; it is the common resentment of all men. We fee also by experience, that he who fears labour and suffering, often fails of goodness, and willingly renounces it, when he finds any trouble to conserve it. He eafily quits the rudder when he fees the least storm of temptation, or opposite action arise, and rather then fuffer bumiliation, he will quit vertue, and if there be occasion, renounce his portion of Paradise, rather then the pleafure and content he takes in doing his own will. will, rather then his own quiet and repose. We see the greatest part of Christians dare not enter into consideration of their lives past, nor restect seriously on their sim, nor think of death, or surre estate of the soul, meerly by reason of sear to suffer sorrow for their sins. That they may not be sensible of the apprehension they ought to have of God's Judgements, they will not so much as think thereon. Hereupon they persevere in their malice, and remain finally obstinate in their sins, living in ignorance of things necessary to salvation; so true it is that the least fear of pains withdraws them from vertue.

To see how much this fear is prejudiciall, let us confider that to the acquifition and conservation of vertues two things are necesfary which require both travel and pain. First, we must destroy ill habits, next, we must acquire vertuous habits; We cannot ruine the evil without mortification, and consequently pains and sufferings; we cannot root them out without privation and resignation, wherein is both travel and the crefs. But if we will obtain good babits, and practife Christian vertues, and all in grace, then we must have a great care, vigilancy and strength of courage to refift all oppositions, that nature, inclinations, or occasions present unto us. And although vertue be beautifull, fiveet, and

and acceptable, yet the finds contrarieties, and then the needs rejulation to use violence, Matth 5, and to come to the point whereof Jesus Christ 29, 30, spake, when he said, If thy right eye offend thee, plack it out, and saft it behind thee; if chy right hand offend thee, cut it off; words which thew the pain and travel a Christian is obliged to undergo to root out of his beart, and teat from his foul, all that is contrary to the Law of God and vertue, words which condemn our delicates, and all that fear labour and fufferings, excusing themselves by their weakneß of nature. To comprehend the importance, of this advice; Let us lift up our eyes to the contemplation of the truth and spirit of Christianity s there we shall learn of the Son of God, that the Kingdom of heaven is gained by violence, that the gruce of Christianity is grounded up-on suffering, that the perfection is in love, in love oracifying ; that all the mayes of God, and the operations of his frit, confift in privation and refignation, and confequently in the crofs. Whence it necessarily follows, that they who fly fufferings and humiliation, feeking onely a sweet pleafant life, fearing pains and bravel, do by this fear, make themselves unworthy of God, who reigneth on the orofs, and Is onely found in the thorns of the fiery bufb. They withdraw themselves from the King. dom of grace, which agrees with annihilation; they

they that their heart against love, and which is more to be lamented, go out of the order of God, and from the conformity, they ought to have with fefur Christ crucified, who is the object, the way, and the life of perfect Christiour, and of Jefus Christ, who cannot conduct our felves, but in the way of annihilating, of fuffering and humiliation, which is the way of Jesus Christ, his life and essence. Here may these delicate persons see how their faintheartedness deceives them. Let us then take heed, and leriously consider the fentence that Jesus Christ pronounces against them: He that takes not up his cross and follows me, is not worthy of me. To fear sufferings to fly humiliation, to refuse the communication of God, is to make our selves unworthy and uncapuble of all his divine operations of grace s for God cannot communicate himself to the foul in the wayes of grace, but he will eause therein annihilation and humility. All the operations of grace can have no effects in our fouls, but those of humility, abnegation and death. Grace must operate in the fouls, that which death doth in the body. This is so known a truth, that all that speak of grace, unless that it's proper and principall effect, is to give us to God, to make God live in us, and to place therein his love and favour. It is impossible for God to operate all that in us, without annihilations.

lations, subversions, humiliations and death, unless he pluck the love of our selves and the Creatures from our hearts, he cannot plant his own therein. If he kill not in us the old Adam, never will sesus Christ live in us. God cannot dwell in us, if he do not annihilate and consume the impurities and malice of our souls. Thus Christian grace, to produce its effects in us, requires an estate of submission and death. They therefore deceive themselves, who think they are in grace, yet bear no mark at all of this grace, for if it be in a soul, it will infallibly produce the effects proper to it, if it produce nothing, it is a signit is not there.

Herein also appeares the wrong that the fear of suffering causeth to Christians, How much do souls separate themselves from God, who seek no other consolation, satisfaction and enjoyment but their own, and labour onely to put themselves into a certain repose, thinking that perfection consists in this false rest, and never to suffer any crosse, affliction or temptation. No no, Earth is the place of combate; Christian life is the death of man; perfect love, like the Phenix, seeks death, and findes life in the same stames; the Crosse gave grace, grace now give the the crosse, the sacred spouse saith, she is fair but brown, scorched with the burning beauty of divine

Cant. 1.5

Cant. I

leve. He that cannot fuffer, cannot love, he that cannot love, is not worthy of God, or the name of a Christian. It is love that trib umph'd over Jefur Christ, annihilated him to the condition of our mertally, it is love than humbled him, even to our lowness and infirmister, it is love that crucified him; Christi-

If then the Christian will love, if he will

anity hath no other love or grace.

be subject to the Kingdom of grace, he must defie all sufferings, and couragiously embrace all that shall befall him, for love overthrowes all, and triumphs over the foul. If the flatter, it is to burt, if it hurt it is to kill, fo they who feek true and folid piety, must not behold God but in the Greffe, nor confider grace but in humility and fufferings. My mellbeloved, faith the spoule in the Canticles, is a bundle of myrrhe; the confesses she fainted and dyed in the communications of love, the received from her God. For when the spouse had given her his love, and ordained charity in her, the instantly adds, flay me with Cane. 2. 5. flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am Ock of love. The greatness of God, the infinity of his being, his divine spirit are so powerful, that if he never so little communicate himfelf to the foul by the purity of love and grace,

He is able to annihilate and confume her. For if he apply himself to the Creature, with-

out

out proportioning himself to its capacity, he cannot be supported, for he overwhelms and ruines the created, being by this power infinite, and infinitely predominating over a being to small, so subjected to his power. In fine, it would fwallow up and consume it, if he did not proportion his operation to our meakness, and if he gave us not a capacity and force to bear it. But whatfoever he doth, if he communicate himself, he alwayes annihilates, if he giveth grace, he changeth the man, if he giveth light, he humbles him, if he make him to bear his love he wounds him. Thus the foul that will love God, must love sufferings; he that will love the life of grace, must lose himself, and annihilate himself to receive divine operations. He that will beare the light of truth, must humble himself, seeing God doth not manifest himself but to the bumble of spirit, and that all the works of God bear his Croffe in bumility. Hence we learn, that it is necessary we esteem the Croffe and fufferings, and embrace them with joy and fervour of spirit, but we must further observe that sufferings, Subversions, losser and humiliations, and other misfortunes of humane life, are necessary to a Christian, to keep him steadfast amidst the deceits and blandisoments of the World, the Subtleties and Surprizes of the Devill. By these wayes

wayes which we call rigorous, God fevers us. from the world, and takes us from kindnesito the creatures; he makes use of these losses and subversions as of gall and bitterness to mingle with the fweets that the creatures prefent to us. He uses humiliation and affliction to abate our pride; and if he do leave us for a time, it is to bumble us, and in all this, he is most mercifull to us, whereof they are unworthy, who fear sufferings, and for love of themselves, oppose the love that God bears them, and destroy what God would do for

their good.

Moreover by these losses and eversions, by sufferings and humiliations, privations and abnegations, God delivers us from the nets and Inares of the Devil. This enemy of our falvation feldom tempts us but in the Principles of nature, and our own inclinations, he makes use of the love of our selves against our felves. Now he is unable to do us evil, and is deceived in his malice. When God youchfafes to annihilate us, and put us into the wayes of suffering, of desertion, of humiliations; or when of our selves we give our selves to the study of mortifications, to exercises of humility and to the practice of the spirit, of repentance; for through these mortifications, we destroy in us whatsoever is evil, and pluck from our felves that which ferves as an

an instrument of the Devil to loose us and deceive us.

In fine, by sufferings and humiliations, we put our felves out of hazard, and are shielded from the dangerous darts, and most forcible temptations of the Devil, because it is a thing so noble and so worthy to fuffer, and to fuffer in the spirit of grace, that it is above nature, & the common order. Whence it comes to pass, that the Devil, who cannot tempt, but according to the order of nature, knows not how to take the foul that lives in the first of sufferance, and of the cross. But if he will alfault her, (as he will not fail to do) it will be against her fufferings, endeavouring to destroy in the foul the spirit of the cross, suggesting to her temptations of impatience, of envy, of vexation, giving her occasion to make ill use thereof. For he knows that the foul is in affurance, and out of danger fo long as the shall remain faithfull to her fufferings, to her everfions and humiliations, and to the state of the cross, in as much as this evangelicall firit is a wall of fire which invironeth the foul, a cloud that covers her, a buckler that protects her, and bumility is the foundation that upholds her, min in

Reflecting upon what we have faid, we fee it is a great impediment to the way of perfection to decline fufferings, and not to care

to make advantage of all that happens to us, to receive it, and to bear all according to the spirit of the grace of Christianity. And by these Principles, we shall know how far pusil-lanimous and fearfull soules stray from solid vertue, who fear all things, who seek nothing but delight, consolation and satisfaction, To remedy these abuses, let us see with what dispositions we must receive all the emergencies of humane life, and in what spirit we must bear them.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Dispositions wherewith we must bear sufferings, and all the adversities of humane life.

Whall find him condemned to a thoufand disturbances and evils; his life is a perpetual marfare, his dwelling, in the land of
his enemies, his estate confists in the adventities
of the world, which like a sea, full of racks and
storms, to seth him perpetually up and down,
and holds him in continual fear. Dangers
threaten him, miseries, seckness, and death are
the portion of his life, sadness and sighes his
ordinary entertainment; in his greatest pleasures, he finds a bitter sweet, some missurtune

is always prefent, or some apprehension seizes him, which mingles the fweet of his pleafure with the gall of some misfarture, it is common to all meh, none are exempt, not Kinge by their power, nor the Learned by their prudence it was faid by a King in his greatest and most just resentments, Truly, every man Pfal. 39.6. house is altogether vanity: But if he be a Christian, he is yet more subject to sufferings, though in another respect, as a member of Jefus Christ, he must, like his head, bear thorns, and the erofs, being by the flate of Christianity, and the grace flowing from the crofs, affor ciated to the conditions, croffes, and fufferings of Jefus Chrift, he is united to him, and partakes of his spirit and life. In this sense is it, that Saint Chryfastom expounds that passage of Saint Paul, God is faithfull, by wbom you 1 Cor. 1.6 bave been called to the fellowship of his for Jefus Christ our Lord. The holy Aposte teaches us that a Christian is affociated to Jefus Christ, and as fuch, he must have no other portion in the world, but temptations, sufferings, and defentions. Let no man (faith Saint Paul, to his new convert) be moved by thefe afflictions, 1 Thef. 3. for your feloes know that we are appointed there- 3. autow voido

Temptations, advertime, humiliations, and everfions are the gifts of God to his elett, tokens of his love and favour, to which purpose

Tob. 12.

73. .

pole Saint Mark furnishes us with a pertinent Text, where the Son of God promising 29,30. Apostles, and all those that would follow him, rewards worthy of God, and proportionable to his Love, reckons up many, adding, that he will give them eroffer and perfecutions, as an additionall of his love and favour. This is the way that God takes to lead us to beaven, the means he uses to establish our falvation, and makes us agreeable to his divine Majesty.

The Wife man speaking of the just, faith, Wild. 3.6. be hath tried them like gold in the furnace, and hath received them as a burnt-offering, and pleasant victims sacrificed to the supreme Effence of God by croffes and humiliations. God operates our sandification, conserves us, confirms us, in his divine mercies. There needs no other witness then the Angel Ruphael, when he faid to Tobit, Because thou art pleasing to God, it was necessary that temptation should try thee. This is evident, that the state of sufferings is necessary, and how much it imports us to esteem of them, to bear them with affection, and make use of them with prefit, for God hath greater designes over fouls by sufferings, then by all other wayes of grace that we could represent, it is the state that most purely and holily honours his divine being; it is the spirit of Christianity; in brief,

it

know how to drink of the cup of blessing, he must learn to ascend the ladder that reacheth from earth to the arms of God. And to apply our selves thereto with method and facility, we will divide this matter into three dispositions which accompany our sufferings, and the state of the soul in her crosses.

First, We may suffer according to divine

wayes.

Brit

Secondly, By the spirit of Christianity.

Thirdly, In the zeal of Justice against sin. In these three Dispositions we shall find all the reft. To suffer according to divine ways belongs onely to fouls who are truly Gods, who adhere to him, and are diffolved in his love. To fuffer this way is wholly divine, he mast be wholly God's, love nothing but God, and be in the pure regard of God. have this Disposition perfect, the soul in its sufferings, eversions and humiliation, and in all the contrarieties of humane life, must have no other thought nor interiour state, but to suffer, because it is the pleasure of God she should suffer. This I call a pure regard of God, the fuffers onely to praise God, onely because God hath delight to see her suffer, and wills that she should fuffer. This Dispositition is the flate that the Wife man calls the Wild. 3.6. Sacrifice of the Holocaust, a sacrifice killed

and

and layd whole on the Alter; as the belocanft is all confumed and unwhilated to the glory, tentent, and honour of God alone, withour the Creatures having any part thereins fo the foul fuffering in this pure regard of God, factifices her felf wholly to God, and is wholly confumed in the good pleasure of God, without her bringing or receiving any other intention, thought or flute wherein her happiness doth confift. For God feeing the foul fuffer onely for his content and good pleafure, gives her a fufficiency and capacity to fuffer with fo much liberty and amplitude, that she no longer regards what the fuffers, nor thinks more of fufferings, but only thinks to do the good pleafure of God. So that the undergoes not fufferings with pain, but with love, and with a disposition that beares in it more of love then of fufferance in the fuffering it felf, refigning her felf wholly to God, and to all the effects of his spirit and grace, how vigorous foever they may be, thinking no more of fufferings, but believing and loving; and in this disposition, love is the life of sufferings, and fufferings are the objett of love, of a love pure and perfett.

To fuffer according to divine wayes, may yet be understood in another manner, when in fufferings, mortifications and humiliations, the fool is such to God, and so firmly united,

that

that all things in the World are painfull to her, all is unsupportable to her, and her own body causes her to sigh and lament, saying with the Aposte. We grown within our selves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Every where she findes contrariety, and the more she lives in Jesus Christ, the more she seeds the weight of the Creature; all her repose is to be Gods, she seeks not, nor sindes any thing but pain and contrariety, for she sindes all her pleasure, all her repose and con-

tent to be in the good pleasure of God.

In this disposition the soul must be really lost in God, for she no more beares all the adversities of bumane life, but according to the spirit of God with a divine patience, that is in the same manner that God beares them, or if you will in the spirit wherewith Jesus Christ suffered our nature, our sins and the Worlds, a patience which we must adore and imitate in Jesus Christ, for he did not one-ly beare them, but also (which is admirable in the excess of his love) gave his life, a divine life for our sins, and by the same patience, bearing the contrariety that his divine and instince essence hath to all impure and limited creatures, he acted with the creature, laboured and died for it.

This patience of Jesus Christ, is the beginting and cause of our happiness, this patience

is the cause that all the just and boly that ever were in the Church militant, have born all adversities with peace and meekness; this patience must alwayes make us to suffer all the rigours of this life, but after a manner fo much more perfect and divine as the foul hath received of grace, and is advanced in the way of perfection, according to the measure that the foul is possessed of the life of Jesus Christ, to the same measure the spirit of sufferance, must be pure in her, and she must remain more relign'd to the designes of God, more divided from all Creatures. In this point confisteth the principall subject to be examined, whereby to know the fidelity of the foul. He that would know the way to make use of this divine spirit, must learn it of Fefus Christ, who is the rule and example of our life and actions, all that he did, all that he fuffered, had relation to the glory of his Father, to the exaltation of his name, to the eftablishment of the Kingdom of God in our fouls. In a word, he lived in the World, and dyed upon the Crosse, onely to do the good pleasure and will of his Father. My meat (faid he to his Apostles) is to do the will of him that fent me: This was the end of his coming and of his incarnation. Let us do the fame, and remember, that as we must have purity of intention in all our actions, so must

Jo.4. 34.

must we in all our suffering, have a puran gard to the will and good pleafure of Ood. When we shall suffer 6 what soever it he delet us fufferit because Gadvernitalits onlique point it on because he will show his power of ver us, and will be glorified in our Jubiction. Let us not regard out own suterest. but no dervalue all things in respect of the glary of God Let us leadure them onely in regard of God fince it is his will fince he takes pleafing to fee us in sufferings and in the Croffe Land shat he will flew his power in our fubmillion. Let us reduce all our intentions hither , they may be good but this includes all the reft. In this disposition, Jefus Christoprepared himself for the Groffe, and prefented himself to his Father to be the offering and the facrifice of the helpsauft a propinition for our fine, Mar. it. Thy will be done; faid he and no more; let us fay the fame in all events, let us fettle the faundation of our faul in this estate and dipo-

To this me must add a remarkable admini tion for those who will profit by fufferings hamiliations, and other adversities of humane life, and bear them with faithfulness. And that in this, that in all conditions of life, in all that may happen to us, we must endeauour to find out of it be possible, the designes which God hath quer us, in all that he does of pers

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didid

mits

full to receive them, and co-operate faithfully with them. For as God in all he does or permets, hath alwayes fome design worthy of his greatness and goodness, so is it the duty of the foul to submit her felf thereto, to subject her felf according to all her capacity, that with an intire consent, the may act with God, if need be, and receive with fidelity all things according to the designer and intentions of God: as for instance. There happens losses and rumes, we are to fee if God by thefe loffes, would feparate and fever us from the Creatures. If it be fo, we must accept them with this disposition, and make it our endeavour to sever and deprive our selves of the love of all things created, because that by the loffes and difgraces which befall us, we fee that this is the defign of God. Or elfe if by bumiliations, and interiour or exteriour eversions, God will ambilate us, let us confent to this annihilation, and applying our selves thereto, co-operate with the work of God, with all the extent and power of our foul, and fo let us do in all, and according to the diversity of the objects.

This advice is not contrary to the pure regard of God which we must have in all sufferings, for in the works of God, and in all that he permits, we must consider the end for

which

which God does it, and the cause that moves him either to permit it or doit. The end of the works of God is his honour and glory, but the cause that moves him in his operations, and divine permissions, is the falvation of our fouls, the establishment and communication of his fpirit, his graces, and his vertues. We must here do as before, we must suffer, having no and but the pure regard of God, and of his plory. But because God requires fidelity, and will establish his Kingdom and power in our fouls, it is also our duty to co-operate with his intentions, and to receive all things not onely because such is his good pleasure But also in the manner that he will, and to make use thereof according to his pleafure, which die

The perfection therefore of the spirit of fufferance, confifteth not in receiving all things indifferently; a foul is not perfect though it be infensible of all accidents, be they never fo fad and miferable. Perfection confifts not in a Stoitall apathy, but if there be a perfection and purity in suffering, it is when we receive all things in the Prit, and in the boly & divine diffositions of Jesus, and that we bear them after that manner that God wills, and according to the defigns and intentions of God. And herein confifts the first and nobleft Difficition, which must accompany 203 SIT Aa 2 our

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How we ought to fuffer in the spirit of Christing in the spirit and sind sind and seed a chand

1 Pet. 2.

I Frohen you do well, and fuffer for it, you take It placently, it is acceptable to God, for hereunto. were you called, because Christ atto faffered for us, leaving is an example that we should follow bee fless. In these words full of efficacy and truth the Prince of the Apostles proposes the mos tites which obligge us to suffer patiently all adversities and afflictions which occur in all conditions of this life. He faith, that we are called thereto, and that by confequence, the proper condition and quality of a Christian, binds us to the Croffe. It is not necessary to alledge proofs of this, feeing we have faid enough already. For the friit, grace, and conduct of God, whereby he uses to save us, is no other then that of unubitations and but miliations, and afflictions. God hath try'd them, and found them worthy of him.

The Crosse and sufferings is then the lot of Christians, it is their portion, and they must make such use of it, as to bear it Christianly. But the most powerful motive the Apostic

makes

makes use of to teach us patience is, when he layes, that Jefus Christ Suffered for us, and that we must imitate him, and follow his steps, after this we cannot in reason find any thing hard If fefus Christ from his birth to his death, hath espoused the sufferings and embraced the Croft, wherefore should we refuse being his Children to live and dye as he did? we know that the Son of God came from Heaven to Earth, to fuffer the humiliations and pains due to fins and finners, and that He would by this low estate, honour his Father; but withall, he left upon the Earth the fame Spirit to bonour God; that as in Heaven God is honoured by exaltation, he might be honoured upon Earth by humiliation. In pur-Suance of this design of Jesus Christ, we must as Christians honour God by our lowness and annibilation. On the other fide, feeing the Some of God dyed for us, we must dye for him; if he be the example of our life, as the A postle sayes, we must imitate him, and if he be born our head, according to St. Paul, we must, as his members, bear his spirit, and follow his motions. In a word, if we raigh with Jefus Chrift, we must suffer with him, There remains then no more, then to know the Spirit and dispositions, wherewith we must receive and bear Sufferings \ on an danished : Sloger the reason of it confished inches

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We have faid, that the 2d Diffosition necesfary to a perfect Christian, to live faithfully in the adversities of humane life, is to bear them in a Christian way, and according to the spirit of Christianity. Now we fuffer in Christian ways, when we fuffer what befalls us as an order of God, and as an estate prepared for Christians, and by which God will conduct us to the heritage of Christians; so that according to this Disposition, we make no reflection at all on our fufferings, nor upon the effater and overturnings wherein we are, our spirit one-ly remains settled and fastened upon the thought of this truth, I am a Christian, and as fuch, I belong to Jesus Christ, who puts me into what estate he pleases; and because I am oblig'd to do his good pleasure, I will have no other thought then to refign my felf to Jesus Christ, to do with me according to his good pleasure. By adhering to this truth, by this Disposition and interiour estate, the foul is united to Jesus Christ, as the members are to their head, and the remains subject to his condult, without further care or thought, then that she is God's because God wills it. Herein confisteth the spirit of Christianity, and the duty of a perfect Christian.

This Disposition is pure and simple, and produceth in the soul a perfest peace, calm and repose; the reason of it consistes in that

the Sufferings, bumiliations and contempts are the centre of the Christian foul, as things created have no repose but in their centre, so the perfect Christian cannot have the true repose of the soul but in sufferings; and in this Disposition, they are the centre of Christianity. because the eternall Word was pleased to place his estate and whole life in humiliation. He was born in poverty, he lived in contempt, he died upon the croß, all the passages of his way-faring life were in continual sufferings and lowness; and also when he was in Heaven, in the bosom of the Father, in the throne of the greatness of the Divinity, he entertain'd thoughts of the cross, he consents to death, and prepares himself for sufferings, when that from all eternity he resolv'd to be made man, and to invest himself with the infirmities of our nature; fo true is it, that all the conditions of the Son of God were in fufferings and lowness. This also the centre, repose and life of a persett Christian ought to be in the estate and life of Jesius Christ, and as the life of Jesus Christ and his estates are contained in adversities, in lowness, and in the thoughts of the cross, it consequently follows, that the centre, the repose of a Christian cannot be but in this estate of sufferings, and in the same condition of suffering that Jesus Christ was here upon earth.

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When

When we fay that the centre and spirit of Christanity is no other then the crus, annihis lations and advertition, we must conceive it in the highest, and consider that the Son of God came into the World for the clary of his Father, to facisfie his devine Juffice, and for the fantification of our fouls. These were his defignes, defires, and thoughts. Now, the thoughts and intentions of the Son of God are eternall and permanent, for they are divine, and it is the property of the effence and of divine actions to be immutable and permonent. Seeing then that the Son of God hath chosen the cross from all eternity, & lived aponearth in the spirit of sufferance, he remains alwayes in the thoughts of the cross, in the defires of humiliation and the rigour of death, the real of the glery of his Father goes not from his beart, but he preserves this forris, and offers himself to his Father, to bear it eternally, and to suffer the effects of it, if it be his good pleasure. This zeal ought not to be unfruitfull; this offer is not to be refused, and yer the estate of his greatness, and the condition of his glory cannot permit it. What remedy? Love, alwayes wife and inventive, hath found out a means to fatisfie the equity of his defires, and divine affection, and the Majesty of his glory, for the eternall Father hath given his Son a mysticall body, which

which is his Church; the lines appointed him Head over all his Church, which is his body, & all Christians are members of this body, true Eph. s. members, as the budy is a true body, though a 30. my frient body: We are, faith the Apolile, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Now to this body, and these members, the spirit and read of Jepus Christ, communicates it felf by the designe and special counsel of the bleffed Trinity . In purfuit of this drome counlet, the Son of God pours into his Church, and upon thriftims, the goal of the glory of Gods the spirit of the cross, and the love of juffice; he pours, it out as he pleafes, diftribating his gifts according to his buly will. To forme he communicates his spirit of fufferance and croffer, to others that of death; and to fpeak more generally, he communieuter his eftates and spirit to whom he pleafer; and as he pleafes. So Saint Paul, I fill up Col. 1, 14 that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flest, Reflecting on this truth, we shall clearly fee, that the first of Christianity is no other then the spirit of Jefus, which he communicates to his Church, being the head, and to Christians his members. And as this first is no other then a defire of the glory of God, love of the cross, and zeal of justice, it follows, they who will be good Christians, must necessarily bear this fpirit, and be in this estate

Spinituell Transfere:

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estate of annihilation and the cross, and embrace all adversities that they meet with, yea, embrace them couragiously as an order of God established upon them, and as an estate, which is singularly proper for them: In this Disposition they shall find the centre and repose of their souls, and in this subjection to the cross, they shall obtain the peace that Jesus Christ hath acquired for us by his cross.

We may also say, that to suffer Christianly, is to bear all things with cheerfulness of spirit, doing like the Apostles, who departed, re-

fer shame for his Names sake; and like the first leb. 10. Christians, who took joyfully the spoyling of their goods, defied torments, and the cruelty of beasts, like Saint Ignatius; the burning of fire, as Saint Lawrence; the violence of torments, as Saint Agnes, and in the Churches first beginning their zeal to suffer, was so great, that it made the Apostle Saint James to the saint James to the saint sai

Lay, Count it all joy when you fall into divers comptations. This advice will seem hard, for the rigours of the tross and pains of this life are too piercing, but if we love, all will be easie; for where love is, saith Saint Bernard, there is nothing but sweetness, and nothing is difficult to him that loves; though thornes guard and encompass the Rose, we gather it notwithstanding, and enjoy its beauty and

odour.

odour. Jacob layes, be ferved feven years for Gen. 39. Rachel, and they feemed unto him but a few dayes, because he loved her so much, that he was infenfible of the travail. He also that will fuffer Christianly must love, for he that cannot love, cannot fuffer, and he that can neither fuffer nor love, is no Christian, seeing that love is the spirit of Christianity, and sufferance the fpirit of love to annum sids as locks

This principle confidered, no rigours that we find in bumane life, can appear difficult, and misfortunes and pains are onely irk forme to us for want of love. Let us then but love, and they will all be easie; by love, the fufferings of Christians are distinguished from those of others. For it is common to all men to suffer, it is the condition of their being, and portion of their life, and the more they think themselves fecure, the more they are Surprised with misfortunes, but it belongs onely to Christians to fuffer with love. The finner is drawn by the neck like a flave, to do the will of God; the good man willingly followes him, and findes no pain in any thing; but on the contrary, he finds comfort in travail, and repose in displeasure. In this sense the Apostle cryes out upon fight of the wounds and scarrs he endured for Jesus Christ; Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I Gal. 6. 17 bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jefus. And

And elsewhere, I will glory willingly in my Con the informities, that the power of Jefus Christ may dwell in me. To fuffer in this difposition, is to fuffer Christianly, or else let us fay, that to fuffer Christianly, is to suffer with an esteem of sufferings. There are divers reasons why we should take and well esteem them, but the principal confifteth, in that Jefus Christ hath chosen this manner of life as a way that honoureth more divinely the Majefty of God then any other estate, and he hath chosen this way from all etermity, and by confequence from all eternity he beares the thoughts and love of the Crofs! He hath chofenthe Crofs, faith St. Paul, he hath embraced it from the first moment of his incarnation, and by an excess of love, he began to fuffer as foon as he was born And that which is to be observed, is that by the election of his devine wifden which never tails, he hath made choyce of confusion and contempt, rather then greatness and contentment. So faith the Apostle of him, and we find it in his divine Mysteries. And from hence comes the esteem that we ought to have thereof, and the reverence we should bear to this estate, for the Some of God having chosen the Croffe and fufferings, and having united to his diwine per fon by his incarnation, meanne (s, and infirmities, and adversities of humane life, he hath

Paroil V. Spiritual Treasures?

hath made them divine, and ennobled them So that we must regard them much more for the dignity which they receive from fefus Christ, and to speak properly, they are the fufferings of Jejus Christ, for we are united to han, we are members of his body, flesh of his Refle, bone of his beine, and by reason of this unity, they are no more our sufferings then the fufferings of Jefus, feeing they are more I let to freat then to our felves. Whence Saint Buil faith, as the fufferings of Christ abound in 2 Cor. 1.5. going fo var consolution abounds by Jefus Christ. The Apostle highly advancing the sufferings of Christianity, calls them the sufferings of fefull 80. Percy spiecks in the fame manners Rejeyce in as much as you are pantakers of Pet. 4. Christ's fufferings sa And therefore when we fee all that is in this World, all the advertitiat and viciffitudes, we must not passe them over indifferently i consisten without grace and pertue, stop at our own resentments, and loofe our felves in our weakness and parurall passions, but we must lift up our eyes and thoughts to the consideration of Catholick truths, and making use of the light of Faith, endeavour to use all things according to the manner God requires, and to the power he hath given us. If we fuffer, let us not suffer as flaves and criminalis, but as the Children and true Servants of God. Let us suffer with efteem

Spiritual Tragance Parolity Reem, and in the spirit of Christianity, a first holy and droine; a spirit powerfull and couragious; and which onely belongs to the chosen of God, and to his greatest friends. Hence the Apostle summing up the graces that the new Christians had received of God, puts sufferings in the first place, and accounts them as a fingular faceur. He bach 2.29. given you, faith he, not onely to believe on bim, but to fuffer for him, thereby shewing that it is a benefit of God to be called to the state use thereof. The wind to know how to make the thereof. In the view of these truths, let us beg of the Some of God, part of his fpirit of the Crose and fufferings, and his grace to lup port us under them, that we may bear them with the fpirit, with joy, and the grace of Christianity, let us fay with Saint Paul, and often repeat this Prayer in our heart, That the Lord would prepare our hearts to the love of God, and to the patience of Jefue Chrift: we save suo out All Auer ow sud sino to the confideration of Cacheliel, it s making use of the lists of lately codes. voire to use all things according to momener God requires, and to the years he had given us. If we suffer, let us not foller as

daves and criminalist but as the Children and set.

CHAP. XIV.

That we must suffer out of a zeal to the Justice

VIE suffer in the wayes of sinners and for the zeul of Justice (which is the third Difposition that we have proposed) when we enter into the zeal of God, which brings him to do justice upon sin, and that in all things we exercise upon our selves, the judgement that God exercifeth therein, in bearing in our bearts a true defire and an effectual will to submit to the justice of God, before whom we are finners, before whom we have offended to many ways. By this Difposition, the perfett Christian must undergo all forts of pains and fufferings, and regard the advertities and inconveniencies of humane life, as effetts of God's Justice on him as a sinner, whereby he would destroy fin in him, and root out imperfections. With this fpirit and Disposition he must endure all naturall incommodities, as cold, beat, poverty, fickness, afflictions, and fuch accidents, which are the attendants of our life, regarding and bearing them with this zeal to the Juffice of God upon fin. This thought, if it be folid and

Spiritually Treasures

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and well fettled in the foul of a perfect Christia on, will make all pain sweet and easie. For what can we fuffer, but we deserve much more, if we weight our affictions, our sufferings, travails and adversities with the mimbar of our fins? Who will not fee the deformity and weight of our fins, and how much they furpais the rigour and weight phone deferings of If we consider the bata and bears to fin, and to finners by reason of fin, who will not confess, that our crime are our affliction, and sufferings, even the great test and most insupportable the merch of God appears more then his suffice? What more manifest example of Gods barred against a simer, then the rigour wherewith the divine justice, which is alwayes equitable, punished fin in Fesus Christ? And if the exerwall Father, as the Prophet faith, fo rigoroully chastised his Son, for the fine of his people, what thould be not do to us? If the Son of God who is holiness it self fanctity, uncreased and incarnate, becoming a pledge and of fering for our fine, was subjected non onaly to our miferies and naturall informities which are great, but to advertities afflictions, powerty, contempt, acquisation, ignoming, even to the rigour of the cross what ought we to fusfer who are simmers and objects of the harred bas and

Ma.53.5.

and justice of God? If this be done to the Luke 13, green wood, what will be done to the dry? If the Some of God, who is the eternall and true mistam, chose this estate, voluntarily subjected himself to all miseries, incited by geal to the glory of his Father, and to satisfie divine Justice, what ought not we to do? what pains and rigours, should not we embrace who are the guilty, to appeale this anarry God, to satisfie and allay his provoked wrath, to restore to glory what we have raveished from him?

Let us enter into this disposition and zeal of submitting our selves to the stroke of Gods Justice, and we shall see all things will be easie to indure, we shall nor complain whatever befalls us, whatfoever is done unto us, we shall not take it as a wrong, nothing will appear barfu unto us, nothing insupportable, the quality of finners, and multitude of our offences will tell us that we deferve more, we shall bless God for the favour he does us, in giving us the meanes to honour him by our fufferings. The Christian therefore must have a care to bear all adversities, all changes of this life, all forts of afflictions, lofses and misfortunes, yea all incommodities, and naturall vexations of humane life, with an intention to glarifie God to fubmit to divine Justice against fin. O how great must be

the courage of a Christian, how invincible his constancy in all changes and missfortunes, if he protesseth this zeal of God, if he be animated with the hatred God beares to sin! How easie would all things appear, if in them we had no intent but to all and suffer onely to please God, with a full resignation of our selves, in all things to his divine conduct.

To facilitate this diffosition, and make it more generall, we must remember that the Wildom of God rules all this great World, and hath a generall and particular superintendeney over all things. Nothing happens by chance to God, all is foreseen by his prestience, and ruled by his providence. In this wife conduct he is Soveraign, and meanes to shew his power, and subject men to his will, and as Soveraign he disposes all, and as wife, he ordains all, it belongs to him to ruine or build up, to advance or debase, and to us to entertain. So that in difgraces and misfortunes, we must regard God as our Soveraign and Mafler, and therefore must receive them with the greatest submission and zeal of Justice, which will that God diffose of all as he pleafer, and that we receive all according to his difpensation. This is the zeat and submission that God requires of us, whereby the most just and hely embrace all manner of accidents, acknowledging the Soveraignty of God,

God and spotsing their dependance. is just that God should do in us, and with us, all that he pleases, and that we should be

content in all things.

This is to effential to man, to just in the disposall of the Universe, that we shall easily lee in the morks of God, that that Soveraign Majeffy will be acknowledged, and adored in afflictions with to much necessity, that he never stops the course of his Justice, nor withholds fufferings and other pains, till the foul submit and freely render her self to God, and untill the do to fuhmit her felf, the will still be under the red. So faid Daniel, threatning the great Nebuchadnezar, God will bum- Darities ble thee, tell thou know that the most high ruleth in the Kingdom of men. The impious Antiochus, made a publick confession, which the cha-Stifement of God as a Rack extorted from his guilty mouth . That truly it mas a just thing to fubmit bimfelf to God. The first disposition then wherein a Christian ought to be in all sufferings and advertities, in all forts of estates and chances, is to subject himself to God, because be is God. Alpon this subjection, he must ground his defire and real, to abandon himfelf wholly to the divine justice, seeing all that is milerable and painful in this World, is an effect of his justice and the reward of fin, and we fee that Bb 2 21173

that all the chances that happen in this World are the effects of his power and conduct.

This being supposed we are obliged to bear them, and receive them with a zeal and defire to appeade that Justice which requires that we be subject to God, and suffer for our fins. Herein confifts the disposition we speak of. If we would practife this disposition, it is thus. First the Christian must accept of all adversities and afflictions, which are or may be in the life of man, as a mark of the will of God, and an effect of his Justice upon him; he must them embrace, and bear them in this fense, and with a defire to please God, and submit to his divine Justice, who vouchfafes to manifest himself in these painfull and taberious wayes; he must regard them as na-turall and necessary, not considering whence they come, and who is the immediate cause thereof, but shutting his eyes to all considerations, he must look up towards God, and accept them of his fatherly hands. If there happen any motion contrary to the disposition, he must say with the penitent and of-flitted King, Righteous art thou O Lord, and upright are thy Judgements. Nor must be content himself with this; but passing farther, he must offer himself to God, to bear all his chastifements after the manner that God wills, and as long as shall please him. And fince the

Pfal.119.

true Christian always distrusts his own strength. he must beg grace of the Sonne of God, to fufrain them according to the intention of God. and fidelity to make fuch use of them as he requires. For as it suffices not a perfect Chri-Itian to conform himself to the will of God, and to do what God wills, but he must accomplish it after the manner that God wills, and according to the vocation and grace wherein God hath established him, so in suffering, which is an estate more noble and certain, it is not sufficient to fuffer patiently, (for Philosophy and generosity can produce this effect, and make the greatest rigours embraceable) but we must suffer Christianly, aster the manner that God wills, according to his designes, conformable to the grace the foul receives of him, which ought to be ferioully confidered by those who are most advanced in the wayes of grace, and who owe a great fidelity to God. And fince to difcern this is difficult, and that the foul may commit in it great impurities, and much infidelity, it suffices, to be exempted of the miscarriages which may happen, that he who feriously looks after Christian perfection, and endeayours to pleafe God above all things, be carefull to preserve himself in an absolute refignation of himself to the power and will of God; in which estate if it be firmly setled, there Bb 3

Spirman Thenfares Part IV.

there is nothing to be feared; But all there will prove easile, in regard that patients in suffering and purity, ought to be proportionable to the state of grace wherein the south when the prace is singular and transcendent.

and according to the vertical and gover wherein Got had tell of the distributed him to make

complish it after the manuer that find rolls

The continuance of the precedent Chapter, and of

O fuffer all things out of Regitto God's Justice, is not onely a Difposition, But a for it of penitence, necessary to all, fince all have sinned, and need the grave of God, as profitable to a Christian, as rependance is necessary. True penitence hath no end but God, no revard but to satisfie God. To repent, is to enter into a regard of our felves in zeal to God's juffice, Who will bumin in its. We mist take heed that the true point of repentance operate in us a resentment of the state whereto we are reduced by fm, a state which diffileafer God, and draws us from the andly, presence, and grace of God, a state whereinto we put our felves through our own fault, to satisfie our own inclinations and passions. The foul feeing her felf to estranged from God, and being fensible of this misfortune, is grieved

grieved extremely, and enters into a defire to be revened of her felf, and to pleafe God, whom the hath offended, the doth protest to leve him above all things; for if the could not love him, the could not defire to pleafe him. This love elevates her into an efteem, by this efteem and love, the finds it easie to bear all pains, rigours, or difficulties whatfoever; the overcomes them couragiously; the onely minds to please God, whom the hath offended; so that by this zeal to his justice, all things are easie to her; the contrarieties of this present life, and the unexpected rigour's and disgrace are light. In brief, animated with this zeal, the willingly embraces all that thay happen unto her, and receives it as a speciall favour. The reason is, because such a foul loves God, loving God, the efteems him; efteeming him, the will not difflease him, and as much as fhe hath diffleafed him by her offences, the defires to glorifie him; and this: defire bears her to a zeal of Gods justice; and finally, this zeal animates her to fuppart all things patiently, and to embrace them freely, and they bod minimo as ed light.

Hence we learn, that the true spirit of Repentance consisteth not onely in sorton for fins committed, and a hatred of all fins, but also it contains a desire to glarifie God; for we can no more enter into Paradise without

Bb 4 this,

this, then without repentance; Herein they must have a care, who perform indeed some acts of mortification, and fuffer many things, but with certain diffemblings, or out of some private considerations or concernments, and many times out of curiofity. Let them take heed they build not with fram; for true repentance hath no eyes but for God s no other regard but to content God, and to glerifie his divine justice. The more love the foul hath, the more ardent is her zeal, so that if she love much, the defires to forrow much, and believes the hath never done enough, for true love is never fatisfied. Such a foul esteemoth all pains sweet, injuries, truth, contempt, honour, and labours the enjoyments of her spirit. O how good it is to fuffer thus, for who knows how to love, knows how to fuffer, and transported with the love of sufferings, cryes out with the penitent King, Lord, prove me and try me, fearch my reins and heart.

ropentance, we must further consider the effects of it; for if it be true, the effects of it shall be as certain, and will be great and true. True repentance, annihilates us, and deffroys fin in us, and the fountains of sin; as also our evil inclinations and vicious habits; it roots out of our bearts all that divides us from God, all that displeaseth him; it convents

us so God, it drawes us neer to him, it gives us God, and separates us from the recutures, and our felves. For the true penitent is crucified in all things, and dead to himfelf, of a death to fin, which giveth him life in God, and makes him lead a new life, altered in himself and in his actions. This is the true meaning of Saint Paul, where he faith, Ar you have yeilded your members fervants to un. Rom, 6.19 cleannes, and to iniquity, even fo now yeild your members fervants to righteoufnefs, unto holinefs. Which shews the great change and conversion which repentance must operate in us, feeing our members, which have been fervants to fin, must now be onely servants to righteoufriefs, and to ferve God, after a manner which operates in us fantification, and ferves as an inftrument to our glory. The two tho

Further, true repentance unites us to God, and puts us into a new and particular relation to Jesus Christ. He acquires a new right over us, when we participate of his mercies, and applies to us the merits of his death and sufferings, pardoning our sin. He acquires a new right over us, because he applies to us the price of his blood, by the merits of his death. He withdraws us from the empire of sin, whereto we had subjected and sold our selves; he delivers us from the captivity and slavery of vice, to put us into the liberty of his

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his children, into the possession of his spirit s
so that from the time that he delivered us
from the type of sin, we belong unto
him, and are his children, his captives, his
beritage s we are so many times his, as he
pardons our sins, as many sines his, as he
pardons our sins, as many sines his, as he
pardons our sins, as many sines his pardons,
so many times he offers himself to his eternall
Father, to pay the price of our misseleds, and
offereth him the merit and satisfaction of his
death for the redemption of offences. Thus he
purchaseth us anew as often as he pardoneth
our sins, him and a series and satisfaction of his

Repentance, if it be true, gives the Son of God a new night in us, and draws us from the right we have of our felves, to put us into new propriety as to him, whence it follows, that the fins which feparated us from God by our own default, ferve by the bands of rependance, to unite us to God by the new night fefus Christ hath to us, by the band of love which we have to him. Many fins are for-Luk.7.47 biven her, for she loved much, and be to whom less in pardoned loved less, saith fesus Christ. True

in pardoned loved less, saith fe sus Christ. True repentance produceth two admirable effects, one in relation to Jesus Christ, which comprehends an abnegation from the creature and our selves to be God's and Jesus Christ, to whom we must be the more united, the more he hath pardoned us. The Futher's in effect of

love, which iffues from this union & adherence.

He that is most united, loves most, and the more he woer, the falter he ties himlelf Mary Muydulen is an example hereof, who was no foother converced, but the fallened Her felf to Jefas Offiff, to crucifie her felf m his love, and to live no longer then with him, and for him. If we will examine what hath been faid, it will be easie to fee, that many perfons decrive themselves in this bufine is of to great concernment, I mean, Repentance, who go so negligently, and indifferently to this Sacrament, that being they are sensible neither of the effect nor advantage of it, and it is much to be seared, lest they find at the hour of death, rather the pentence of a perfictions Judas, of an impions Antiochus, of a lenfuall Efan, then of a Saint Peter, or a Mary Magdalen. However, if be, let him apprehend the menaces of the 300 of God, If ye do not repent, ye shall likewife periffs. He Luk.13.3. Reaks of the true repentance, which cannot be orde, if it have not the true effects, elle it is not rependante." Herein the Christian muit take need, as the most important thing of his falldation. If we apply these principles of truth, we than find that it hath been ho digreffion to speak of Repentance, but that by the same principles which oblige us to bear the spirit of true penitence, we have the grace and faculty to live patiently and Christianty, amidst all contrarieties

testes and

trarieties and diffurbances of this life, and in pursuit of that, we may make use, with profit, of all accidents we meet with in the world. He that lives in the spirit of repentance, as a perfect Christian, ought not onely to suffer with euse and cheerfulness, but also to Jubjest himself to the divine will and bonour of God, wherein confifts the spirit of repentance. In brief, he makes his profit of all as a faithfull steward of God's gifts, I say, he makes profit, knowing it is a favour received of Jesus Christ, that all sufferings and adversities in this world are profitable to us, being fandified by the pretious sufferings of the Son of Ged, and may ferve to latisfie the justice of God, which must be looked upon as a particular mercy and favour which Jefus the Son of God hath obtain'd for us by his mearna tion and death. For if we confider naturally the sufferings and afflictions of mans life, they can no way profit us, because as men and finners, and the children of Adem, we are subject to all the miseries of nature, we are condemned to eat our bread in the sweat of our brows, and undergo all the maledictions of God; and we know, that all the evilsincident to nature, and that happen to us in the course of our life, are but the guerdon of our crimes, the portion of man, and the effell of fin, wherein we are born,

So

So that these eville deserve not that God should regard them of themselves, as being incapable to fatisfie God's Juffice, were it not that the Some of God making himself man, and charging himself with our nature, with all our infirmities, hath fandlified them in his person, and in his use of them. So that bearing them in his fpirit, we bear them with bleffing and happiness, fince that, when he was made a facrifice for our fins, and became a propitiation to appeale the wrath of God for our offences, he luffered the pain of death due to fin, whereby it was bleffed and fanttified, and by an effect worthy his bounty, he would that the fufferings of men, which were but the effects and punishments of fin, should merit grace, and find acceptation, when we support them in his spirit, and in his divine dispositions. This St. Paul teaches, faying, Te : Cor. 8.5 know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be made rich. For the Some of God making himself man, is subject to our necessities and labours, that in our labours and necessities, we might be made rich in good works, in patience, and in the fpirit of Repentance.

When therefore we confider the fufferings of this life, and all the bumiliations and diffraces that may befall us, we must look Firft,

upon them two wayes.

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fined as an inflation of the branches of

Secondly, As the spirit of fefus, and as fanctified and made divine in his formed per-

fon. The first are not profitchle, nor are they proper, but for the wicked who are in shaflifements and sufferings by way of Justice fulfering what they have merited. But the fecond are full of bleffedness and happiness, for it is in them and by them that Jefus Christ fanctifies us, that he dwells in us, and effablishes in our fouls the works of grace. If ye be repreached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you. Words which tell us, the frit of fefur Christ, his grace and glory inhabit in fouls who fuffer for love of him. The Christian therefore that fuffers, must take heed to this vertue, that he fuffer not as a criminal, that is by necessity and force, but as a Christian, and in necessary dispafitions. For fince God hath given a bleffing to fufferings, and by a mercy spring from these lufferings of Jesis Christ, we may profit by the difadvantages of this World, we must not unprofitably let flip the occasions, mor indifferently paffe over the weceffety, pains, and feverall estates of this life, but make profit thereof, seeing God will have it so, and that he gives us power to do fo. Bor this reason mult we and ayour to keen them in the frist

bason them two waves

and in the bleffing that Jefus Christ hath given them, and according to the use he would have us to make of them. The Christian that lives in this care and vigilance, may hope for the recompence of Heaven, and having gone through the combate of this life, which to the good is but a . Tim. 4.7 continual Martyrdom, may fay with Saint Paul , I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Fatth, benceforth there is laid up for me a Grown of righteou fress, which the Lord the righteous Judge Shall give me at that day.

In fine, the most affured mark we have of the perfection of a foul, is sufferings, which are continual and abundant to the just, and if it be lawfull to take any Argument of our faluation, or any fign of our election, it is in fufferings, and in the manner of bearing them. So the Same of God calls those happy Mat. 5.10. that fuffer for his fake, and for his glory, land we may fay of fuch fouls as Soul faid of David, when feeing him fo patient in the greatest violence of his afflictions, he cryed out I Sam 14 with teares, Now I know for certain, that they 20. Shalt be surely King, and that the Kingdom of I freel shall be established in thy band. We may fay the fame of a patient Christian, but let us leave him in this hope, and propose to him some entertainments of Piety.

CHAP.

City Silv er Salbreson I

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del ingli lo sam o XVI.

The Abridgement of the fourth part, teaching of Christian grace.

Johns. 1. Hrift faith, we are all ingraffed in him, as the scien is in the Vine-stock, we are bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, as the Apostle Bph. 5 30. fayes; for we are his body, we are in him, and with him. This truth alone shews how much we are obliged to live bolily and perfectly, to be regulated in our actions, in our exteriour, modest and boly, being united to Jesus Christ, our life must be an expression of the life of Jefus, and as Jefus, being the Son of God, by nature is the Image of his Father; fo a Christian being the child of God by grace must be the Image of the same, Jesus Christ, an Image so perfect and divine, as cannot be fully expressed: For on the one side the life of a perfect Christian, is a life hid from the eyes of man, firitual and invisible, and therefore infinitely remov'd from the caparity of the children of Adam, who are maserial, and, as the Apolile faith, carnal and animal. On the other fide, this life is a life of grace, a divine life, a life of God in man, alife full of fecrets, operated by God

in the depth of the foul. Our weak nuture hath not termes proportionable to the greatness and Majesty of devine things, and theretore all that we can fay of the state of Christianity, of grace, and of the life of a perfeet Christian, doth but derogate from, and deface the value of this work which cannot appear in its luftre, but to their eyes who have the true light of Heaven, nor can be conceived or comprehended but by fouls that are chosen of God. We must notwithstanding; draw the last lines of our Christian image, and lightly paffing over what hath been faid to Sweeten that which appeares either too high or too harsb, that so we may benefit those who will fee things in perspective and superficially, we must also fix our eyes and thoughts upon Christian grace, which will make us apprehend the truth of what hath been proposed, and, if we can understand it, will cause us to admire the indulgence and communications of God, who out of the excess of his love, the more advanceth men and sinners, the more they were debased by the greatness of their ingratitude, that grace might superabound where fin had abounded, that love might tri umph over us. Let us then descend to the particularities of grace, and examine the properties and effects thereof. A louis and bas

The grace which we receive and fanctigrace

fies us, is the grace of Jefus Christ, which flowes from his fulnels, and communicates to our fouls grace, which is not onely fuperna. turall, but was made for Jefus, and is propore tioned to his Soveraignty and infinite dignity, whence we are called Christians. It hath all its being, dignity, and residence in Jesus, it is an bove our nature, and in the rank of supernaturall things, in an order foveraign and particular, worthy of the foveraignty of Jefus, and proportioned to his Filiation, order and grace, very different from the original! Two hite, which was given to the first man. For though the grace of Adam were supernatural, yet was it an order very inferiour to Christian grace, being proportioned to his nature and inclinations, in the state of innocency, All men as well as Adam, had been fandified in the order, and according to the order of nature, and in the naturall uses thereof. But it is not fo in Christian grace, for that is not proportioned to the nature of man, but above it, wholly in Jefus, wholly for him, it issues out of him, and, by an effect proper and particular to it, drawes us from our felves, to unite us to him, as members to the head, and being united, fandlifter us in Him, in fuch a manner as that we are no more in the quality of men, and Children of Adam, but as Children of Ged, and members of the Sonne of God, and by a grace

fulne we have all received una more to

Whence we infer that he who would be functified, and partake of Christian grace, must be united to Jefas Christ, as the branch to the Tree, the grafe to the flock, the members to the head, and if united, must also be one with him, as the head and members make up but one body, and confequently by reason of that inity, must not onely partake of his grace, but also his spirit and life in the fame manner as we fay, the members move not themselves nor live, but by the life of their head. This being confidered, we see that to five Christianly, it is not enough to fay that we must be in grace, but we must live in the Spirit and life of Jefus, for grace producern this effelt, for as much as by the fame principle, whereby we are united to Jefus, as members to their head, we must live his life, and be guided by his firm. And as it is the property of Christian grace, to unite us to the Sonne of God, fo is ir the effect of the fame grace, to rule us by his forer, and to make us live his. life, wherein appeares how perfett the life of a Christian in grace should be, how exemplary and boy his attions must be, how regular his motions, and how pure his intentions, feeing it is a life of grace which mites us to the Cc 2 him.

felf,

him; causes us to live in his spirit and life. Let us enter further into the consideration of grace, and we shall see, that according to the Apostle, Grace is a participation of the di-Pet. 1.4. vine nature. These words contain the excellency of Chistianity, and describe all that can be faid of grace. The Apostle implies, that we are accidentally what God is substantially, and that which agrees with God, and is proper to him according to his divine nature is appropriated to us, and may be convenient for us, according to the spirit of grace: fo that by grace we are elevated from our own baseness to the fellowship of Jesus Christ, and we are put out of our selves, to receive a new being in God. Can any thing be said more admirable or great? If we reflect on this truth, we must needs confess, that to live according to Christian grace, and bear it's effects in our fouls, we must go out of our felves, and be no more our own, nor in our felves. When we fay, we must go out of our felves, we would intimate, that the Christian, to live like a perfect Christian, must regard nothing but God, mind no Interest but that of the glery of God, please none but God, have no define, but to accomplish the will of God. In brief, he must renounce himfelf, and the love of all things to love none but God. To live so, as to go out of ones felf, is in two words, all that we have pro-

posed in the fourth Part.

This is a Point may be thought bard, and too high, yet the practice thereof is necessary, according to those words of the Son of God He that will follow me, let him deny himself; Luk 9 23. where we fee how much a Christian is w. liged to renounce all, and to go out of himfelf after the manner we have declared, which will appear more eleer, if we consider the effence of the Precept of love, for the love of Christianity is a love, fays Dionyfius the Arenpagite, extatick, that is to fay, it raifeth us to a contempt of our felves, and all things, to unite us to Gody who is effentially love and charity; fo that by the perfection of Christianity, which is in the love of God, we are drawn from the love of out folves and the creature, to be onely God's, and not to enjoy our felves in any thing but in God and

Christianity, we find, that both love and Christian grace, causes us to go out of our selves, to unite us to God, and make us par-

takers of his divine Nature. Dros

bundations in defections and informat, it derefer men of all powers, even that which he had of himless that he may be wholly refine

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Rom the Principle of Truth, last explained, we learn the great difference between the flate of languenty in Adam, and the Chri-Minvrighteoutness in Jefur Christs for Admin shad a phone over all things it was permitted bin to enjoy the whole world, and to rejouce therein! Original righteoufiefs, and the grade of the first man, was in that, and in the lowfull ufe of all things, but Christian grace as quite contrary for God wills not any more that man repoyed and content dimfelf in any thing bur is him, that he lies not but for him; thathe alone be his poffession and benrage. Belides, the frate of Adam was in exaltation, in the posteffion, in the fathefaction and pleasure, that were subjetted to him, during the time that he remained in obedience to God. But the flate of Christianity is wholly opposite, it confists altogether in privations, in bumiliations, in dejections, and in fumm, it devests man of all power, even that which he hath of himself, that he may be wholly Jesus Christ's, that separating himself from the creatures, and from himfelf, Jefus Christ might be his

his All, and his Fulness, that by Christian grace he might enter into society with Jesus Christ, and by him, with his Father, according to what the beloved Apostle promised us, when he said, That your fellowship be with the Father 1 Joh. 1.3.

and fefus Christ his Son.

Thus all the fruition, fatisfaction, pleasure, and exalvation that man took in the creature by originall righteoufres he takes in God, making a happy change and possessing the Creator for the creature, wherein is verified the word of Saint Paul, where fin did abound, Rom. 5.20 grace did superabound. By Christian grace, we are drawn from the creature, and from our selves, to be in Jesus Christ, to possess God, and to take no content or fatisfaction, but in God. The Christian by this grace, takes all in God, lives not but for God, and lives the life of Jefus the Son of God. In this sense, the Apostle, fill'd with this grace, faith, I live, but it is no more I that live, but Jefus Christ who Gal. 2. 20. We should all fay the same, for Christian grace makes us to live of the life of Jejus, which is to true, that we fee the life of a Christian bath for it's fole confervation and food, the very body and blood of Jefus Christ; for, if according to the ordinary maximes of things naturall, we fay that every thing draws it's mitriment, from whence it draws its being, fince the food of a Christian is no other

other then Jesus Christ, it followes by a net. cellary consequence, that his being and life must be the same Jefus Christ ... A truth great and admirable, which shewes us the excellencies of the state of Christianity, and teaches us how holy and perfect the life of a Christian ought to be. If we further confider the fame grace, we shall discover a new secret in Chrihian life; for having faid that grace makes us live the life of Jesus, we ought to know what his life is. The life of Jefus is divinely-bumane, and bumanely-divine; He is God and man, and therefore lives a life divine, and a life humane. As God he lives the life of God in the bosom of his Father, a life of Glory, Power and Majefty: as man he lives the life of man, in lownefs, humiliation, in impotence, in sufferings. So that at the same time, he is living in the bosom of his Father, and dying on the Arms of the Groffe. There he raigns and governs, and judges all the World; here he is accused, condemned, and crucified. At the same instant, he is in the exaltation and greatness of his Majesty, and in the lowness and bumiliation of our bumanity. Such alfo ought the Christian life to be; on the one side it is great, seeing grace makes us the Children of God, elevates and unites us to God, makes us partakers of the proprieties and qualities of God, in a word, deifies Dist

us and makes us as little gods. On the other fide, the fame life is obscured, dejetted, wholly in the first of humiliation and privation; for grace cannot reignin the foul without opera. ting therein annihilation, death and bumility. Morbover, the life of a Christian is exposed to temptations, derided by men, condemned by the minld, and in the greatest cherishing of God, it is agitated by the croß of love. God enlightens the foul by grace, it is granted, but it is in annibilation, he uphalds her, but it is in confounding her; he unites her to him, but it is in leparating her; and the love it felf which she enjoys, unites her to God; she remains feparated from God, as long as the remains uponearth, While we are in the body, we are abfent from the Lord; fo is the at once united 2 Cor. 5.6. in privations, he humbles the barated in

This is the conduct of God over his Church, nay, if we reflect upon the highest works, we shall find, he puts not the ornament of grace, and the foundation of her effate, but in lownest; his grace, his gifti, his fairet, and his communication, we are but in humiliation, when he established the Sacraments, which are conduit pipes whereby he conveighs his graces to his Church, and into our fouls. He hath chosen bread mater, and fuch things as are mean, little, or nothing eftermed among men. In the birth of the Church, he took the croß for the

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the throne of his Empire, a Calvary for his featroyall; he rejected an effate by poverty, sufferings, and martyrdom, and at this day he does
the same in the regency of his Church. It is
true that this littleness is not now known, this
martyrdom is within, all this boliness is hidden,
it appears no more to the eyes of the world,
as it did of old by the triumphr of Saints, who
became victorious and glorious in the effusion
of their blood, and yet notwithwanding, she
cannot be exempted from undergoing her
humiliations, her beresies and persecutions.

According to the proceedings of God in the conduct of his Church, is likewise his carriage in the fandification and government of our fouls, he leads them by the crofs, he retires from them, he hides himfelf, he leaves them in privations, he bumbles them, annihilates them, finder them, overthrows them. The perfeet Christian must refolve to fight with, and bear his fufferings in fuch manner as we have faid, but fufferings that are hidden to men, are known to God, which do glerifie him only in the fight of Angels. Wherin is discovered how they are deceived who in their decouions and exercifes feek refentment, enjoyments, content and fatifaction, and would know and sfeet the excellency and elevations of grace. I call it a deceit, for Christian grace conlists, chiefly in privations, in towners, in rigours, and ania! that

that is it they stand most in fear of and avoid. Now, as the life of Jefus begun in povery, and ended on the eroft, to a perfect Christian, who would live a life of grace, must resolve to walk amongst thornes, to bear privations and fustain desertions; for the cross and thorner are things proper to Christian grace, and to the love of Jesus.

To abridge therefore the life of a Christiand and all that hath been proported, let us (ay that the Confliguto thre and malk morthily, according to the vocation whereto he is delled, mall adout of things find the din Jefus Christ, his centre must be the bosome of God, his life, a hidden martyrdom, and all his actions and sufferings must be pure, and referred to the glory of God; his intentions must look onely upon God, his defires must be onely to please God, his care onely to fallow God, his contentment wholly in God. In brief, his thoughts, his designes, his works must bear the Image of Jefus Christ, the foundation of his being must be onely of God, all to God, and all for God, that he may fay with the Malter of Christians, To me to live is Christ, and to die Phil. 1.21. government of his Charmage The

first which he most recommends Tim. 47. Jayung Fivercife thy felf unto godlines, as if he the lay, Telly all vertues are good, and mitable to the flate of a perfest Christian, the practife



THE FIFTH PART.

Treating of true Piety, and the more particular Duties of a Christian towards Jesus Christ our Lord.

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CHAP. I.)

What Devotion is, and wherein true Piety confifteth.



AINT Paul proposes to his young Timothy, divers admonitions to be used in the particular conduct of himself and government of his Church. The

first which he most recommends is piety, Tim. 47. laying, Exercise thy self unto godliness, as if he should say, Truly all vertues are good, and fuitable to the state of a perfect Christian, the practife

practife thereof profitable, the acquisition usefull and necessary, but his chief care and exercise must be piety, for he adds, godlines is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to

The advice which the Apostle gives his Disciple, we must here propose to our perfect Christian, having already spoken of vertues, the most profitable and necessary to the state of Christianity. There remains then no more to commend unto him, but a true and folid Christian Piety, for this Piety is the Ornament or Mistris of all other vertues. I mean the Christian vertues dispose us, affist us, and put us into a capacity agreeable to God, and to honour him, they are necessary for us to make us worthy of God, they shew us the way to God, but Piety leads us to God, and makes use of all vertues to conduct us thither, and having no object but God, teaches us the worship and honour that we must render to him, and like a good Mistrifs, puts us into a ready and easie practife of true vertues, and entertains us in the exercise of actions that bonour God, and are acceptable to him: In brief, she enables us to pay God what we owe him.

This Piety is the first use, and exercise of a fool; as the first motion, the first instinct, the wob

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full light we have from norms to know God; for the full execute the interior as with, is to honour the fame God, to render him that worfhip and fervice which the Creature owes its Creator. This Piety reaches, to this Are mu cites us, this she produces in us: Whence we may apprehend, how necessary it is to know wherein this orm piery confifteth, and to establish our selves therein. For above all that we have faid already, which is very considerable, it is evident, that this true piety is one of the principall foundations whereby Christian perfection is supported. In the conduct of men all actions and exercifes of their life, are ruled according to piery, and as we commonly fay, according to the devotion they have. If then their perybe not found ed upon a folid foundation, the rest of the Christian life will be unconstant, and its exercifes very uncertain, superficiall, and perhaps, wholly improfitable; as we fee in the devotions of many which is onely in the exteriour, who as the Aposthe faith, having the form of godhi ness, despite the power thereof. In fact fouls we fee nothing folid, nothing but inconstancy in their lives, imperfection in their actions, difquiet, disturbance, and adherence to severall Creat tures in their spirits, a finall blast of adversa life, it is nothing but an appearance and that dow

2 Tim 3.5

dow of piety, counterfeit Pearls, that make a fair glittering flow, but are full onely of wind. Some fall into this evill by ignorance, others by default, it is our duty to direct both into the truth.

wherein piety and true Christian devotion consists. Severall persons speak of it severally, every one adds to it, and appropriates it to his own inclinations, human, and particular affections. But according to Catholick truth, the soundation of solid and true Christian piety, consisteth in the soul's being Jesus Christ's, and belonging to him, by a relation of love and charity. True piety consisteth in the knowledge, esteem, adherence, and subjection of our souleto Jesus Christ, from which esteem, adherence and subjection, all our exercises, actions of devotion and piety, must proceed as heat from the fire, the estat from the cause.

This description of Piety may seem new, but it will appear manifest, if we weigh with patience the deduction thereof, and consider that Jesus Christ is our Savious, our Mediator, by whom we have access to God, by whom we have a relation to the most bigh and most advable Trinity, and refer our life actions, and our selventhereto. Herein consistent true piety for by Jesus Christ, we are acceptable to

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good works. St. Paul teacheth this, when he fall that I ayes that Jefus Christ is all our glory. It is by Jejus Christ, and in him that we live, in him we

merit, and satisfie by fruits worthy repentance; it is in him that they are meritorious, it is he that offers them to his Father (consider these words) and his Father accepts them, and they

him, by him God, who is all sufficient in himself, vouchsafes to accept our willy to

more clear or more to our purpose? Hence

we conclude, that devotion and Christian piety cannot be in a foul, if that foul be not fefus Christ's, if it adhere not to him, and be subject

to his spirit. For if we live not, if we merit not, nor can satisfie God but by Jesus Christ,

it necessarily follows, we cannot live, if we

John, who hath not the Sonne hath not life, implying, he hath nothing, and consequently, he

hath no capacity to honour and ferve God,

wherein confisteth true piety. Whence we may conclude that to arguire true devotion,

we must begin with this esteem of Jesus, and by an adherence and subjection to his spirit and

conduct .

Let us more particularly explain wherein this true piety confifts. To know it, we must not stop at exteriour things, or at offices which have

t Joh, 5.

have nothing but appearance, but we must enter into the bottom of the foul, and regard true devotion onely in the centre of the heart. The proper office and principall duty of true piety, is to cause us to regard God, to induce us to render to God what we owe him. It is necessary that we enter into the knowledge of God, not by speculation or sublime knowledge, but by the light of Faith. This knowl ledge leads us to esteem God, by this esteem we enter into a propriety and a true and abfor lute subjection to his greatness and will; all which is necessary to true devotion, for as much as we cannot render to God the honour, love, and service we owe him; but in as much as we esteem him, and are subject to him. Seeing then Puty confifteth in tendring to God the honour, love, and fervite we owe him, and that we cannot otherwise bonour or ferve him then as we efteem him, and depend of him and his divine will; it followes that to be truly devout, we must act according to the truths of faith, and follow this supernatural light, we must conceive a great esteem of God, and live in great subjection to his Law and divine conduct, and fo to live, is to live in the true spirit of piety, and to be truty devout.

But this is not all, we must proceed fur-ther. The Christian being in the bottom of

his foul and beart, disposed after the manner we mention, feels a spirituall vivacity, an easis ness and promptitude which drives him to the proflife of all vertues, and incites him to shew outwardly, in all forts of actions, the worship, reverence, and love interiour, which he beares his God. This motion is so powerfull, this vivacity so efficacious, that he cannot but outwardly express what he carries in the centre of his heart and foul, as fire that cannot be bid, but will break forth in flames. This inward true piety cannot be concealed, but will appear by its effects, by the exercises of devotion, and by feverall actions of vertue, according as occasion and time permits. We must observe that these exercises of devotion are the more pure sincere and perfect, the more the foul esteems God; her vertues are the more folid and Christian, the more the is subject to the foveraignty of God, and fubmits her felf to his divine will, as much as the encreafes in the light of faith, and efteem of her God, and establishes her felf in this submission and fubjection to the will of God, fo much doth the receive capacity, motion, and facility to all forts of exercises of piety, and the practise of all vertues. The more this inward estate is augmented and perfected in her, the more her inward and outward actions are pure, boly, and perfect, not that she believes Devotion to be

esteems them nothing, but seels her self driven to these exercises, and believes that she owes all that to God, to render him the bonour and service whereto she is obliged; she regards not what she does, it is impossible for her to consider or esteem of it, she onely regards God whom she ought to bonour and love with all her strength, and serve as much as she can with purity and infinite perfection. This advice is much to be considered, for it is in this case, that we can easily discover by what spirit the soul is guided in her devotions: by this a man may truly judge of his state, and of the property he makes in Christian perfection.

To fumme what hath been faid, we see that in true piety there are two things to be considered, one the interiour and bottom of the foul, the other, the exteriour, which consisteth in its actions. The interiour we look upon as the principalli root and cause of true piety; the exteriour is but as the blossome and fruit; as the actions of devotion which appear to men, are but the mark of piety, and makes shew of it, but true piety consisteth in the interiour, as we have said. They therefore who study onely the exterious, and have no care but to produce actions fair in appearance, have the image and shadow of piety, and are able to deceive our eyes, and to

delude the judgements of men, who see but the outside, and perhaps, before the eyes of that divine spirit which penetrates the centre of our fouls, they are neither devout, nor acceptable to him, for all their great performances; unless these actions of piety, which appeare outwardly proceed from the very bottome, from a good foundation, from an interiour fuch as we have described. A Christian who would be devout, to acquire a folid and Christian piety, must before all things bear an esteem of God; and if he truly esteem God, he will make account of all that is of God. he will honour all that is in the Church of God, and in any condition or estate will accept all the effects of the providence and conduct of God, he will resigne himself to his divine will, and above all, endeavour to enter into an indisfoluble relation to God, and having obtained this interiour, he easily practifes vertue, and feels a promptitude to embrace all forts of exercises of devotion. By this we know true piety.

When all these qualifications we have mentioned do not meet in the foul, she is then far from devotion. For what piety can there be in a foul which is not God's? what refentment of devotion can be found in a Christian who lives in a state unworthy of God, and displeasing to his goodness? shall we call

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them devout, who flatter, haply glorify themselves in their fair appearances, and only study the exteriour, despising all the rest? who honour God with their hands in some exercises whereto they oblige themselves, praising him with the mouth by felected prayers, and often affetted, and yet diffenour him in their life, and blaspheme him in their hearts? God may fay of most Christians, and of his I frael, what he once said of the Jews; This people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. For which reason we must fear what Christ immediately adds, faying, but in vain do they worship me; for God vouchsafes not to look Mark 7.7. upon these devotions, and cannot but detest these Christians, who like the Samaritans will on the one fide adore vanity, and idolatrize their own lufts; and on the other fide, pro-Mat. 23. fess the morship of the true God, who appear 27. like sepulchres, painted without, but have nothing within but albes and rottenness. These Christ severely reprehends, these we advise by this Discourse, out of a defire to propose the remedy, and show them the truth.

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CHAP. II.

The necessity we have to be Jesus Christ's, if we would attain true devotion.

70 man cometh to the Father, faith Jefus Christ, but by me; to shew us that no man hath access to God, but by his intercesfion. By these words, he shews us the need we have of him, and the impotence wherein we all are. The impotence appears, in that we can do nothing without him, and cannot return to God but by him; For fin hath not onely separated us from God, but also taken from us the power and right to return to God, and in effect, we would never have our sins, if the Son of God by his divine mercy did not conduct and bring us, to receive prace and favour. The eternall Father receives us not, accepts not of our actions, is not pleased with our devotions and homage, otherwise then by his Son, in him, and by him, God triumphs over us. By him we freuk to God, by him, we fee God, by him, we offer our felves to God; fo true is it, that without him we can do nothing, we cannot have access to the threne of divine mercy, nor be acceptable to God, but by him. Hence we must confess,

confess, that the Christian who would acquire true vertue, and defireth to live in the perfection of his eftate, as he is obliged, must necessarily be Jesus Christ's. He must adhere to him, appertain to him, be fubjected to his firit and conduct, and much more particularly, if he would have true devotion; For feeing true piety confifteth principally in being God's, and rendring to his most facred and foveraign Majesty, the worship, bonour, and fervice due to him, and that otherwife we are unworthy and uncopable to do all that, without Jesus Christ, by whom, as we have faid, we are God's, without whom we can neither honour God, no be acceptable to him ; It follows, that the foundation of true piety confifteth in Fosus Christ, that is, in the adhe. rence and relation of our fouts to Jefus Christ, and in the fubmission of our being and life to the conduct of his foirit and grace; for by that adhering to him, and being subjected to him, we are pleasing to God, and receive in him, and by him the capacity of honouring and ferving God, which is the proper effect, and chief duty of piety and devotion.

The truth would need no proof, but that few persons think thereof, and that many are ignorant of it, therefore it seems to be to purpose, to speak thereof more at large in the Principles of Christianity. With-

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out going any further, let us confider, that to be a Christian, we must put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new man, Jefus Chrift, it is the Dodrine of the Apostle whereon we must found our Discourse. If to be a Christian, we must crucify and put off the old man, to put on the new, with much more reafon, to be a good and devout Christian we must crucify and put off the first, to invest us with the ferond. When we fay that we multibe clathed with Jefus Chrift, it is to shew we must he wited to him, adhere to him, and as a gorment adheres to the body, and is united to its so must we be Jesus Christ's, but much more perfectly then this comparison expresses. Reason and Faith will easily convince us of this truth, if we doubt of it; for faith reaches us, that it belongs to Jesus Christ to give us grace and strength, to put off the old man, that is, to draw us from our imperfections, to deliver us from our fins, and annihilate our evil inclinations. It is the same that Jesus Christ invests us with the new, gives us his fpirit, grace and vertue; for and according to Saint Paul, Jefus Christ hath been to us wifdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; In a word, Jefus Christ is all in all tous. Now, that the Son of God may operate in us all that we have faid, it is necessary that we be united to him, adhere to him, and

1 Cor. 1...

be subjected to his defignes, his will and divine operations. Who can deny fo manifest a truth? If Jefus annihilate our evill inclinations, and zeet fin out of our hearts, ought not we to be fubjet to his conduct and fpirit, and fo receive his operations of mercy ? If we participate of his grace and vertue, and live according to his Commandements, is it not neceffary we should be united to him? And how should we be united to him, but by a true relation and faithful adherence to him? This deduction is easie, and clearly shewes how true it is that the foundation of true piety confifteth in unity, and in the adherence and dependance of the foul on Jefus Christ; it is acknowledged by all that depotion cannot be true, if we be not exempted from our vices and imperfections, and filled with the fpirit of Fefus Chrift, and affifted with his grace, to make us worthy to honour and ferve God. We cannot perceive in that devotion, nor practife the exercises thereof, if the Same Jesus Christ be not operating in us the mill, and perfecting according to his will.

in them to all Christians, Abide in me and I Joh. 15.
in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of it 4, 5.
felf, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye,
except ye abide in me, adding, he that abideth in
me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much.

fruit,

fruit, for without me ye can do nothing. O words of love! words spoken the eve of his death, to thew us the excess of his love that proceed. ed from his beart, wholly divine, and full of tenderness, whereby being moved, he further faid unto them, Abide in my love. So infinitely was he defirous to poffers our hearts, and to triumph over us by his love, whence he often repeats the fame words, to engrave and imprint this care in our fouls, and by the proceedings of his love, oblige us to love him again. This indeed is a thing we ought to have continually in our thoughts, for all the happiness of a Christian, consisteth in this relation, and this amorous dwelling of our fouls in Jefus. All our good is in this union, fince that by it, and the adherence we have to Jefus, we become his, and by him we receive a power and capacity to bear the fruits of good works, to practife verme, and to paffe our life in the exercises of true piety and Christian devotion, which make us hope for the reward which God promises to those that ferve him. Without this relation and union, we shall continue in our weakness and incapacity, our life is unprofitable, barren,

Joh, 15.6. unfruitfull, and in evident perill. If any man abide not in me, faith Jefus Christ, he is cost forth as a branch, and is withered, and men ga-

ther them and cast them into the fire.

If we will come to the experience of what we have faid, let us examine Goa's conduct of fuch fouls as he will fave, and we shall find that the first knowledge he gives them, is that of Jefus Christ, proposing to them his Crosse, or some Mystery of his life; the first motions, the first thoughts of piety that he inspires them with, are those of a certain compassion and fympathy with his Croffe and fufferings; or those of love and tendernes in confideration of his benefits. If on the other fide we intentively confider fouls, even the most ignorant, we shall easily know they have a fecret resentment, and an inclination to fefus Christ, though they know him not. But God alwayes begins these divine Communications and effects of his mercy by this first grace. The reason is manifest in Divinity, which teaches us, that the eternall Father doth nothing but by Jofus Christ operates nothing in our Souls, nor in the state of grace, no more then in nature, but by his Sonne. The first favour therefore the elect foul chooses to receive of God, is that the eternall Father hath given it to his Sonne, and there Jefus Christ accepts of it, and appropriates it to himfelf. Now as God demands our co-operation, which yet we cannot give without his grace, and therefore inspires the foul with a resentment of Jefus Christ, gently infinuating into it a certain astraction

Joh. 6.44.

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traction which sweetly drawes it to a knowledge and piety towards Jesus Christ; so our soul begins to be Jesus Christs, perfecting her self in the state of christianity, according to the measure that he advances in this affection, and in this relation to Jesus Christ.

on, and in this relation to Jefus Christ.

The Some of God speaking to the Jemes.

obstinate in their errours, faith, None can come unto me, if the Father who bath fent me doth not draw him. And to shew the manner that the eternall Father uses to lead our souls to his Sonne, he adds, Every man that bath heard of the Father cometh unto me, These words include the fecrets of grace, and are full of Myflery. They teach us, that the eternall Father by his grace, drawes us and guides us to his Sonne, he speaks to us by his inspirations in the interiour of our fouls; he shewes us that we are Jefus Christ's. Is not this to fay all that we have proposed? That the design of God to fave w, is no other then to give us his Some, to unite us to him by the powerfull attractions of his grace, and to cause us to adhere to him by love and the exercises of a life truly ebristian; herein doth true piety confift. We must therefore continually elevate our hearts and spirits to this Jesus, the onely happiness of our souls; we must entreat him to accomplish in us the designs of his Father, and to take an absolute power over us. We must

must so offer our selves to him, as to have no other intention, will, nor conduct but his, that we may by a true relation, verifie what Saint Joh. 6.44. Paul faid, All is yours, you are Christs, and v. 45. Christ is Gods. Let us fo think of him, and so do, that from henceforth our hearts and mouths may neither speak nor think, but of him, that all things elle may be of no favour to us, that nothing enter our spirit, which resenteth not the spirit and odor of Jesus Christ, and respires not his bonour and glory. In a word, let us adhere to him, and, by an indiffoluble and eternall union, dwell in . him, that he may dwell in us, that we may eternally bear the effect of his holy word. He that is joyned unto the Lord is the one spirit. O how happy is the foul that is called to this 17. bappiness, and that is truly in the power of fefus, in the poffeffion of his spirit, and direction of his grace. This is the state whereto Chriflian perfection must arrive, the foundation of piety and true devotion. But because many think not of it, and many know it not, we must treat of it more at large, and propose the motives that most oblige us to this Devotion. of a life which o

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CHAP. III.

of Piety to Jesus Christ and its principall es-

WHAT we have already faid of the Sonne of God, is sufficient to make us know what we owe unto him, but the importance of this subject, requires that for our better information, we explain particularly the principles of this piety, and the meanes necessary to attain it. But before we enter into this subject, we must consider that devotion to the Sonne of God, (wherein we are to imitate all Christians) is not so to limit our fouls, as to withdraw them from what they owe to God, but on the contrary, the exercise of this piety is necessary to conduct us more worthily, and holily to God, because by piety to the Sonne of God, we attain a capacity and power to honour God. Jes fus Christ is our way, by him alone we go to God; he is our life, by him we live the life of grace, a life which onely makes us worthy to honour God. He is our Truth, in him alone, as the spirit of truth, we know God, we adore him and ferve him in truth; according to the Apostle, he is our All, in him and

by him we have all things: by the Son the Father gives us all, and by the Son, we render all to the Father. This is the gift we receive of God, and the gift we give to God, for all is operated and fubfifts in the unity of Jefus Chrift. The Church offers nothing to, demands nothing of the bleffed Trinity, but by Jefus Christ. We must imitate the Church in pious customs.

Piety to Jefus Christ requires not so much exteriour exercises, as interiour and permanent effate doth in our fouls, nor demands it any nevelty of affection, but a newnels of spirit, a new diffosition, enclining our fouls to employ themselves in the thought of Jesus Christ, to regard him, to love him, to beneur him as the object and end of our life, actions, and devotions. It requires that the actions of the religious should be devout, those of the ordinary Christians vertuous, those of a private person, familiar in this object, without changing his firit, but directing his intentions and dispositions to the pure regard of the Son of God. For example, let us do all that we do by the spirit of honour, and love to Jesus Christ; if we fuffer, let it be to imitate and render honour to his fufferings; what ever happens to us, let us receive it by a dependance on, and submission to his power and conduct. If we will infift upon any good thoughts, let it be of Fefus Christ, to consider his greatness, the my-Steries Centre

fleries of his life, his vertues, his benefits, and the power he hath over us. By thefe freet entertainments, by these regards of honour and love, the perfect Christian advances himself, is confirm d in the piety we speak of. To know what this piety is, and how we must apply our felves thereto, let us confider, that Jefus Chrift is the principle, the centre, the end of all Christian souls; for as faith teaches us, he is the cause of all the good that is in us, the spring of all the graces we posses, Author of the life which we live in Christianity, and being the principle, he is also consequently the end thereof. For according to the order eftablished in nature, that which is the principle of a thing is also its end, and nature follows invariably the order God hath prefixt, and by his well ordered motions, gently leads, and if not diverted, infallibly conducts all things to the principle whence she draws Beelefi 7. them: So the waters, faith the Wife man, return to the ocean, as to their mothers womb; and according to the mysteries of faith, we fay all things return to God, because they all came out of God. It is the fame in the estate of grace: If then Jefus Christ be the principle of the being, life, and ftate of Christianity, he must be also the end; so that our being, life, and estate regard the same Fesus Christ, and are referred to him as the end, and if the end, the centre centre also of a Christian life. In him our fouls find their repose and perfection; in him, by bim, 36, and of him are all things, faith Saint Paulovan

This Principle alone confidered, flews us that Jefus Chrift hath full power over us, that we are his, not only in despect of his divine greatness, and supreme power over all as God, Saviour and Redeemer, as purchafer of us with his most precious blood, and his of life-giving death, but also, because he is the principle, centre and end of the life and flate of Christianity. In this relation he hath foveraign power over us, having given us being and grace, confecrated us to his glory and bonour, in fuch absolute manner, that the Christian cannot make use either of himself or any other thing, without abuse of the gifts of God, if not for Jesus Christ, and according to his defigne and intentions. This is St. Pauls mean- ICor. 6, ing, when he fays, You are not your own; and 19. again, you have no power on your selves. This power obliges us to refer our selves wholly to Jefus Christ, the first thought and thing to be done in Christian piety, being, to believe we have no right to our felves, but are wholly Christ's, and, having conceived in the depth of our fouls this belief, to have a vigilant care, that in our life and actions we draw not our selves from the power of the Son of God to make use of our selves and the creatures to

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2 Cor. 5.

according to the principle of Christianity, we have no right to appropriate any thing to our selver. This belief is the ground of true piety to Jesus Christ, which Saint Paul teacheth, laying, The Son of God died, that those that the might live no longer to themselves, but to him robustied for them.

On this truth, we ought often to reflect. For as the foundation of it confifteth in a true dependence and love to Jefus Christ, in reprincipall care of him who feeks true piety, must be to continue in this dependance, to bee with fuch fidelity, that he appropriate nothing to himself, either as to his life or aftions, or yet of the creatures, and affuredly, he must make great account of this care and fidelity. But whereto ferves it? To bear in his beare a fenfible defire to belong to the Son of God, and every day to renew his resolutions and and purpofes. What doth it profit our foul, to have the knowledge of so high a truth, if in the actions of humane life and exercises of piery, we withdraw our felves from this dependance on the Son of God, to apply us to our felves, and feek in our own bufiness and exercises our content and satisfaction. This were, by our own actions to belie the refentments of our foul, to profess piety, and follow

low impiety, to bear a double heart, to have werter only in the mouth. For if we are truly devout, we cannot but be Jesus Christ's, and if we are his, our principal tare will certainly be to continue our dependance on him, not onely in that which concerns our condition, but in all the dispositions, intentions, actions, and

circumstances of our life.

The same Principle operates in our Jouls a Jecond effect of piety in that our life and actions, belonging properly to the Son of God, as their beginning and end, ought accordingly to be submitted to his divine conduct, to be ordered after what manner he pleases, according to the power of his spirit, and the light of his loving communications. It is but reason that all good depend on him from whom it proceeds, and that we be ruled, not according to our own wills, which are blind, and transported with affection and self-love, but according to the intentions of Jesus Christ, who is the cause, and ought necessarily to be the rule thereof.

Thus the fecond interiour estate wheteto the Christian, who seeks true piety must arrive, is a Resignation of himself, to the conduct and direction of the grace and spirit of Jesus Christ, that being so subjected, he may perform all his actions in a pure regard to the Son of God, according to his divine intentions. This Re-

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fignation, if true, makes us bear with patience and inward peace, all estates we may possibly arrive to; it gives us liberty of spirit, capacity and strength to follow and embrace that only which is of God, and according to God; it puts us into a great sidelity to the motions of grace, in such manner, that according to the measure of our increase in this resignation, we advance in Christian piety, and live with greater liberty and sidelity of soul.

This indeed appears something difficult, and many believing it an estate onely for the most perfect, pass by it as a thing impossible for them. But if we consider well, we shall find it easie, and acknowledge it common to all souls, who live in grace. To do an action of piety, we must be aided by the grace of Jesus Christ, which encourages & assists us in all good works so necessary, that without this grace, we can neither think, nor act any good.

He then that will be devout, and live in the exercise of true piety, must have this grace, whence it follows he must cooperate with it, and give himself up to be conducted by the spirit of Jesus Christ, who will operate that good work in him, otherwise it will be impossible for him to live well, since that without grace

we can do no good.

1 Cor. 12. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but 3. by the holy Ghost, saith Saint Paul, for it is grace grace that doth all in all, and therefore we Tay, he that will live according to true piety, must take care to resigne himself to the condust of this grace, and with great circumspettion become faithfull therein. The Principle of devotion confilts in being faithfull to the graces and motions that Jesus offers and inspires us with. Herein we must take great care every one according to his state and vocation. Whence we eafily learn, that true and effentiall piety to Jesus Christ, doth not confift barely in actions of homage, and honour, or in giving our felves to him by certain' practices, and employing us in severall exercises, though in it self all be profitable, but the true effence and ground of this devotion confifts in the dependance of our foul on Jefus Christ, and in a true subjecting of our life to his conduct by a faithfull cooperation with his grace and motions: this is the ground and ftate of true piety, to comprehend which, we must confider that all we do is acceptable to Jefus Christ, onely because we are his, all our attions and exercises as good, being derived from his grace, inspired and conducted by his spirit. We may do a thing two wayes, according to naturall motions and inclinations of the old man, or according to the motions and holy inclinations of the new man, Jesus Christ; if what we do, though it feem good, be according Ee 3

to the motions and inclinations, of the old man, it is but of little value, being at the most but naturall and humane actions. But if it issue from motions of grace, then is it truly Christian. Hence we say, the foundation of true piety consists in the subjection of the foul to grace and the conduct of Jesus Christ; for if Jesus Christ do not conduct the soul by grace, nor direct her by his spirit, she can do nothing considerable.

Hence it is, that many deceive and flatter themselves in their imperfections, passing their lives in the practice of many exercifes, neglecting the principall, and thinking they do wonders, when they do nothing, because all their actions are rather effects of their own inclinations, bumours, or felf-love then of grace. The Christian therefore, if he feek perfection, must take heed hereto, and in all things obferve as a maxime in Catholique vertues, that Christian vertue and true piety, consist notin being conformable to reason, and to a bumane spirit, but to the spirit and intention of Jafis Christ, who is the infallible rule of our actions. This advice is of importance; We shall speak of it elfwhere, when we have convinced the more difficult spirits, and made them see the right Jefus Christ hath to us. clienthens of the medican

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The right which the Sonne of God hath tous; Motives obliging us to be his, and to adhere to him by true piety. fake, nonregement use

7 Hich way foever we confider our VV felves, we belong unto the Some of God, this is our bappiness. We belong unto him after a fingular manner; in the flate of nature he hath a right to us, all things being, as the Evangelist faith, made by him. In the being of grace, we belong to him; in the being of glory, we are his; by him all are raifed to glory; by a grace springing from the Myflery of the Incarnation and proper to the state of Christianity, he is our Head, we his Members, he is the Father, we his Children, he our spouse, we his beart and delight, he our Doctor, we his Disciples, he our Pastor, we his fbeep, he our Redeemer, we his Captives, he our King, we his subjects, he the Sacrificer, we his facrifices; in a word, be is our All, the way, the life, and the falvation of the World, and as St. Paul faith, he is our fulness, and we are Eph. 1.23. his by the price of his blood and possession of his firit. We are fo much the Son's, that we cannot be God's, without being first Jefus's, Ee 4 who

who refers us to his Father. If the Father accept us, and behold us with the eyes of merty, it is in the Sonne, in as much as we are his Members, and united unto him.

This union, whereby we belong to the Sonne of God, is fo necessary, that as the eternall Father loves us not but for his Sonne's fake, nor regards us but in him, fo cannot our edions be acceptable to him, nor all our exercifes of piety please him, if they be not done by the conduct of the spirit of his Sonne, and by adherence and union to Jefus, though they may otherwise seem good and perfect. He that is not with me, faith Christ, is against me, and be that gathereth not with me, scattereth. This property is grounded upon the principles of Faith, which teach us, that the Sonne of God onely became man; not the Father nor the bely Ghost, he alone performs the office of Mediator, in the redemption of bumane nature; he alone is our Redeemer, our Mediator, and our Head. In this quality we are his Captives and Members; he is the Father of the Ages to come, and we are his shildren, for he alone begot us by his blood and death, and as a Pelican, he gives us life by the effusion of his blood, and animates us by the first of his Crosse; in the Crosse he begot us, by his death he giveth us that life we lost by the envy of the Serpent, And ad to mea Thus

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195 Thus in all the Myferies of Faith, we adore the Sonne of God, being of the divine perfons the onely incarnate, living and dying for us, he onely redeeming us from the captivity of our fins, being God, became man, that men might become Gods, all the Mysteries of his life accomplished upon Earth; were onely to sanctifie us, his dying upon the crosse; makes him the onely victime and holocaust of our propitiation. Are not these motives sufficient to shew us that we are his in a singular manner, belonging to him by extraordinary relations? Is it not reason we should acknowledge him, and by a particular fidelity, profess our selves his, and carefully endeayour to adhere to him, and by true piety, to render him the honour, love, and fervice, that

This the greatest part of Christians think not of; as being, by reason of their impiety, ignorant of their benefactor, as the Ancients were through their Idolatry of their Creator. It is a strange ingratitude, that man should be to blind in these dayes, as not know his Jesus, and passing his life away carelesly, neglect to acknowledge him in his greatness, to adore him in his works, and to honour him in his humane divine life. Our bufiness then must be to reform this ignorance, and therefore we will propose the principal rights which he hath

his benefits obliege us to.

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hath to us, that we may learn with what piety. and devotion we ought to follow and ferve him, and that those souls who neglect or defpife this piety, may re-enter into themfelves, and endeavour from henceforth, to render to Jesus Christ the honour, love and fervice, whereto they are by so many just relations obliged. The comment of the scripe of the

The first right that Jesus Christ hath to man, is derived from his Quality of being God-man, for fuch is the Sonne of God, not onely in regard of his Divinity, but also according to his humanity. In this quality, Jefus Christ by a power of excellency, ought to rule and command all that is and shall be created, a power that the eternal Father gave him at the first minute of his Incarnation; befides that, by this Mystery, the Son changing his condition for the glory of his Father, and abasing himself to honour him, the Father alfo will needs honour him, conftituting him from thenceforward, the principle of life, grace and glory , proclaiming him Soveraign of the universe, and replenishing his humane nature with all the effects of the Divimity, and all the states of glory possibly communicable to him as God and men, that as the Some benowed his Father in debating himfelf, fo did the Father benour the Some; in exalting him. For this canfe he makes him his equall

equall in power, greatness and Majesty, and invests him from this first moment for evermore, with all the power that he hath over his creatures. This the beloved Apostle teaches, when he faith, The Father hath given Joh 3.35. bim all things into his hand: and St. Paul beginning to write the greatness of Jefus, faith exprefly, speaking of his mission, That the eternall Father appointed him Heire of all things, by whom also he made the World. Thus by this first Right, and by the Mystery of the Intarnation, Jefus hath the fame power over fouls, that the Creator hath over his creatures, and in relation to this power, we give him all that we owe to God, and confequently, acknowledge in this Mystery, Jesus to have a double power over us as God and man. This confideration obliges us to adore and ferve him, acknowledging this power must doubly subject us to his conduct, and divine will. Heaven and Earth pay this duty and fidelity to this fefus God and Man. Let us hear with a refentment of love, how St. John describes the crimphs of our Jefus; he tells us that he heard the Angels crying afond, The Lamb who bath been flain, is worthy to receive power and riches, and wildow and frength, and honour and plory, and bleffing. The Amen and all the creatures of the Universe do the like, and prefent themselves before nath Fefus.

Jesus, declare him their Soveraign, and proRev. 5.13. test obedience and service to him. I heard
saith Saint John, every creature which is in
Heaven and on the Earth, and such as are
in the Sea, and all that are in them, heard I
saying, Blessing, honour, glory and power, he
unto him that sits upon the Throne, and unto
the Lamb for ever and ever. Let us do the
same, and from the bottom of our hearts
say Amen; let us adore Jesus Christ in his
greatness, and acknowledging his Soveraignty, live in true subjestion to his divine
conduct.

The Continuation.

CHAP. V.

Of the Motives which oblige us to belong to Jesus, and to serve him by true piety.

OF all the Mysteries of our salvation, that which ought most humbly to subject us to the will and power of Jesus Christ, is the work of our Redemption; for in this Mystery of love and mercy, Jesus is our Redeemer, we are his Purchase, and have no longer Right either to our selves or to any creature; Ye are not your gwn, saith St. Paul, for ye are bought with a price, meaning, we are Christ's who hath

1 Cor.6

hath bought us with his most ineffably preciour blood. But the better to understand this sublime mystery, let us derive it from its very

fource.

We are then to confider, that by the fin of our first parents, we should all have perished in him, as guilty with him, all nature should have been extinct by his fin; for, from his first offence he ought to bear the execution of the Decree pronounced against him by the mouth of God, in these words, In the day that thou Shalt eat thereof, thou Shalt surely die s And doubtless divine Justice had annihilated Gen. 3.17. him, and in him bumane nature, and all creatures had perished with the Sinner, if the eternall Father beholding his Son defigned for the reparation of this offence had not repress d. the rigour of his Justice. The Father out of the love he bore his Son, suspended the execution of this Decree, he faved the offender, mercy triumphed over justice, he granted this finful man life, and the world to live in; and confequently bumane nature, and the world it felf, which for this fin should have been destroyed, were preferved, onely in confideration of Jefus Christ, for his fake the eternall Father took compassion on us. From this first Consideration, is easily inferr'd, that we owe unto the Son of God all that we are, and all that we have; and therefore we are as often his as there

there are moments in our life; and as often as we receive any benefit from this bountifull band of God; and therefore all these rights which are innumerable, ought to be formany tyes to unite us indiffelubly to Jefus Chrift.

But if we dive further into the contempla. tion of these truths, we shall find, that by sin we belong to the Devil, we have granted him that right, which God by Creation gave us over the creatures; we have, as it were, by fin made over our felves to him. Thus by voluntary offence, Man, who should have commanded, the World, becomes a flave to the Devill, and fels himself to fin. I am carnall, fold under fin, faith St. Paul, in the name of all finners. In this quality the Devill hath all manner of right and power over us, and affuredly would exercise his malite against us, if the divine goodness did not reftrain him. He would make us even now feel the fame rigours which he exercifeth over the damned, and dispose of us at his pleasure, as he doth of fouls eternally curfed of God, were it not that Jefus Christ by his death, hath forc'd us out of this captivity, and devested the Devill of all right and power over us. He hath Col. 2. 14. Blotted out the hand-writing of Ordinances a-

gainst us, faith St. Paul, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to the Croffe. Thus the Sonne of God delivering us from this captivity,

makes

Rom.7.14

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makes us his Captives, acquiring by his blood and death, a new right and power over us, which he will use not with rigour and justice, but with love and mercy, the state of grace and spirit of piety, having nothing but sweetness and indulgence. He hath delivered us, saith the Apostle, from the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. Col.1.13. For the power of Jesus is all in love, and distolves it self into dearness. What Christian seeing so much sweetness, will not resign himself to the excess of this goodness, to the power of this love?

To conceive more fully the effects of the grace of the Some of God, and his rights to us by redemption, observe, that, by the conduct of God, and according to the merit of our offences, fo foon as man is in fin, and withdrawes himfelf from the order and end that God hath prefixld and proposed to him, he is nothing but the object of divine justice, unworthy of any favour from Heaven. Heaven, Earth and Hell bandy against him, God is obliged onely to promote the punishment of fin by malediction, blasphemy, damnation and hell. If God stay the Broke of his Justice, if he hath yet some reserve of mercy for this miferable finner, if he fuffer him to live, and preferve him, out of an expectation of his penitence, that so he may escape hell, it is by Jesus

Jesus Christ, and onely for his sake. We mint then acknowledge that a sinner owes to feasing the sake of the same of his life, all the happiness of his soul, all the good which may be fall him in Heaven or Earth. O how many obligations have we then! even as many as there are moments, as many as we have thoughts, as many as we have received benefits from time to time, so many rights hath fesus Christ to our souls, so many times do we be long to him. Who can number these wonders? Can there be any thing in nature able to break these bonds, and separate us from Jesus?

Let us dive yet a little further into this confideration, by an examination of particulars, let us fee how by daily fins we separate our selves from God, and, shaking off the obedience we owe him, become flaves to fin. He that fins is a flave to fin, faith Jefus Christ, so Toh. 8.34. that the finner by a deplorable blindnefs, withdrawing himself from the sweetness of the Kingdom of the Sonne of God, subjects himself to the power of fin, which would infallibly exercise its rigour and Tyranny over him, if Jefus Christ by his mercy did not suppress its malignity. For as fin ruling over the rebellious Angels, fubjected them to its malice and rigour, causing those Angels of light to be to all eternity Angels of darkness and malediction;

maledition; So the finner, from the time he offended, should be abandoned to the same Tyranny, and left to the fury of sinne, which would precipitate him into all manner of violence, abhomination and mifery, had not fefus. Christ sustained the youk of sin, and stayd the power of its malevolence. So that we are as many times Christ's, as he hath preserved us by his divine mercy from severall fins and abhominations. If on the other fide we confider our actual fins, we must acknowledge that they also serve to bind us to J. Christ, for as many fins as we commit, so many times do we deprive our fouls of the favours and grace which we have received of God, by the only merit of Je. Christ, and when Je. Christ shewes mercy to us, or washes us with his blood, and withdrawes us from our fins, to restore us the graces which we have loft, at the fame time he takes a new power, and acquires as many new rights over us, as he pardons sinnes in us. By this meanes the fins which God pardons in us, oblige and bring us to Jefus Christ. Thus on what fide foever we look on our felves, we wholly belong to Jefus, and confequently are obliged to live in a totall dependance, and perpetuall fubjection to the conduct, spirit, and power of Jefus Chrift.

But if now to what we have faid, should

be added the merits of the Sonne of God, we should find our felves infinitely obliged to be united, and to appertain to the same Jesus Christ. For his merits being infinite in dignity acquire to him, infinite rights over us; nay, if we confider them particularly, we must needs nevertheless acknowledge, that Jesus Christ acquires as many rights over us, as there are moments in his life, fince in Jesus all is of infinite merit. We are his by his Incornation, by his birth, by his teames, by his sufferings, by his Croffe, in a word, we are as many times his, as he lived moments upon earth, as often as he did actions in the world during his life here. But if we lift up our eyes to behold him in his glory, we shall fee him inceffantly, offering up himself for us to his Father, he is entered into Heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us, as Saint Paul faith, where he by continuall benefits thed upon us, forces our acknowledge. ments, that there are so many rights and obligations to appropriate and unite us to him, as there are moments in Eternity.

What remains then, but that we consider by what meanes we may fatisfie so many obligations to the Sonne of God. It is a decree pronounced by him, That of him to whom much hath been given, much shall be required.

Luk. 12,

Heb. 9.

quired. All our life then must be employ'd in true piety, a piety which shall establish us in a fupreme honour, in a most powerful love, and an intire and absolute dependance on Jesus Christ. We must continually begg, that as the Same of God changed his condition, and became man to testifie his love to us, and to deliver us from the captivity of sinne, and put us into the state of falvation, so we may change our condition and difposition, to be happily converted into a pure regard of honour and of imitation of his life, who is all love, all goodneffe.

If you would defire some practises upon this occasion, I would advise the per-

feet Christian,

1. To adore the power of Jesus Christ, and all his rights to us, accept them by a voluntary subjection, and rejoyce therein prayfing the Some of God in that he hath youchfafed to assume those powers and rights over

2. To offer himself to Jesus Christ, to bear the effects of this power over us, fubmitting our selves by a true resignation to all that. it shall please him to operate in us and by us, for his will and glory.

3. To pray to Jesus Christ, to use his right and power over us, and over all that which is ours, notwithstanding the opposition

Ff 2

tion that we may have thereto, as well by the inclinations and imperfections of our nature, as by the effects of our proper malice.

4. Being transported by a defire to be Christ's, often and continually to implore, if it may be done, the power of his spirit to annihilate in us, and to root out of our fouls, and from the bottom of our being, whatever opposes his right over us, and may hinder the effects of his divine will. In fine, if we have not a fense of the power of Jesus Christ, let us at least have in our hearts a violent desire to be his, a firm purpose never to be separated from him, and a vigilancy to receive with faithfulness, what he shall vouchsafe to operate by the influence All this reaches no of his infinite mercy. further then the beginnings of piety to Jesus Christ's we now proceed to the use and pra-Elife of it.

CHAP. VI.

Of the state of Subjection to Jesus Christ con-sidered as the principle of Christian piety.

F we make application of what hath been faid, we shall find, that as the Son of God hath infinite rights to us, so we are infinitly his, we depend on him, we have infinite obligations to him, which the shortness of our dayes will not give us leave sufficiently to admire, nor the weakness of our spirits to comprehend. Yet speaking suitably to our meanness, we may reduce them to two principles, the foundation and prop of all exercises of piety interiour and exteriour.

The first is an acknowledgement of the soveraignty of Jesus over all creatures, and over us in particular, confessing that he is our King and Soveraign. The first use of piety to Jesus, is to acknowledge and adore his supreme authority; it is life and happiness to know and to serve Jesus Christ. Therefore the Apostla defires that the Ephesians should know the love of Jesus Christ, which passeth all knowledge, Eph. 3.19 to the end that they might be filled with all the fulness of God, teaching how profitable and necessary this knowledge is. The other foundation of piety, is a continuation of the first, the Ff 3 Christian

Christian acknowledging the soveraignty of Jesus Christ enters into a state of relation to, and a dependance on him, and adoring his soveraignty, submits to his power, not out of constraint or necessity, as Rebells, but out of choice, love and sidelity, which he renders to him as his Prince and Jesus. This dependance must not be indifferent, but the lowest and most submiss that is possible; so that a Christian in this state, looks upon himself only as a servant to Jesus, and acts in all things, only in the spirit of subjection and humility. This subjection is an effect of our knowledge of Jesus, and that knowledge a fruit of the light of faith, and a gift of grace.

This state of service, is proper and essentiall to the creature, in regard of God; the creature is essentially dependant and subject to the Creator. It is an indispensable estate, the creature may as soon cease to be, as cease to depend on the Creator. It is a primitive estate in grace and essential to all Christians the first step of our entry into the Church & into faith, the first operation of grate in our souls, is to become servants to Jesus Christ. This service is the first estate of Christianity, the first promise that we make to God by a solemn publike profession in the Church by Baptisme. There we devote our selves to Jesus Christ, to belong to him, to depend on him, and at the

fame

fame time we receive and aknowledge him as our Soveraigne, we adore and reverence him as our Redeemer, we are united to him as to our Head. Thus this state of service brings grace; yea, fingular grace, which is the first thing that God gives in his Church by Baptisme, a grace which he gives with a mark and impression of his power, so deeply imprinted in our fords, that nothing can deface it, not Hell it felf. Whence we see, that at the same time that Jesus Christ conceives us by Baptisme, and receives us into his Church as his children, we enter into the state of fervants, and vow our felves to Jefus Christ, as fuch. So that by one and the same Sacrament, we are made children of God, and received his fervants, and consequently we are in the House of God, both as sons and fervants, yet fo, as that we are his children by grace, his fervants by nature. Now as we fay, that the state of subjection is effentiall to the creature, and to the Christian, fo the same state is effentiall to the piety of Christians, and therefore they who would establish themselves in piety, must begin their establishment in this subjection; for we must bear a relation of love and inclinations to Jesus Christ, as we do of purchase and necessity.

To be convinced of this truth, we are to observe that this state of subjection confisted fifteen

fisteth in taking Jesus Christ for the end and object of our actions, we serve him, we contemplate him as our Soveraign and Redeemer, we do all things by a spirit of love, bonour, and dependance on him; So that this state of dependance and service is a generall Disposition wherein we perform all our adions. By this Disposition they are truly Christian, accomplished in the spirit of true piety; and though there appear nothing outwardly, either new or extraordinary in our life, yet by this disposition and state of service, we are more neerly Christ's, who looks on us as his own, raising and uniting us to himself by a reall dependance, wherein confifts the true spirit of piety. For by the state of service we acknowledge Christ our Soveraign and King, and our selves his vassals; we adore him as our Redeemer, and confess our selves his fervants. In this quality we adhere inviolably to all his will; In a word, we fee that he is our Head, and we united to him as his members. In this union we live by his spirit, and follow his motions, in which three points confifteth folid piety, and the perfection of Christianity. So that we are so much the more God's, and consequently the more perfed, by how much we are the more abased and devested of our selves, entirely depending, and faithfully operating under the power and will of him who makes

makes himself ours, that we may be his, and hath purchased us to himself at an inestimable rate. For this cause, they who exercise themselves seriously in piety, begin at the same time to look upon the Son of God as the object of their life, and resign themselves up to him. Hence springs the daily practice of certain acts of interiour devotion, which is ordinarily proposed to them that seek true piety, recommended to them, because they are prositable and necessary, drawing the soul from it self, to elevate and unite it to Jesus Christ. We shall further explain it in the ensuing

Chapter.

But before we enter into that Discourse, we are to know, that we must not conceive these alts of interiour devotion, to be actions meerly transcient, or a simple operation of our firit, for that would be little in comparison of what God requires. But we must pass further, and bear in the bottom of our hearts the ftate wherein we propose these interior alls, that must be our principall end and intention. For though God onely hath power and authority to put us into this estate, when, and how he pleafes, yet, because in the wayes of grace, God doth ordinarily expect our confent and cooperation; it is for that very reafon that the foul exerciseth her felf in this practice of devotion, and it is upon this ac-Borns count count that she forms to her self these interiour Ads, whereby she resignes and offers up to God her beart and will. So that in this exercise, the christian must not content himself to form this Ad, and to pronounce the words, but he must demand of God the grace to bear a permanent estate thereof, and for his part, must do his utmost endeavour to attain it. In the next Chapter you have them particularly explain'd.

CHAP. VII.

Containing certain interiour acts for those souls who are desirous to be established and confirmed in true piety.

The first act of interiour piety to Jesus Christ, which we are to practise frequently every day, is an act of honour and adoration. This I place first, because it is the first employment of our soul, and the first duty of the creature, who is obliged to honour and adore its God with so much necessity, that the very Devills and damned are forced to do it; it is the first act that christian Religion proposeth. To form this act, we must acknowledge Jesus Christ Sonne of God, both God and man, we must regard him as our Soveraign

thien Lord and Redeemer, as cause and principle of all our happiness. We must annihilate our felves before him, and humble our felves even to the bottom of our foul, willingly fubmitting to all that he is. This is called an act of adoration. It contains two effects of the powers of the foul, one of the understandmy employ'd in confidering and acknowledging Jefus Chrift in his greatnefs and Soveraignty, looking on him as the principle of all good, and of all the being of nature and grace, and esteeming and bonouring him as such. Then followes an effect of the will, which humbles it felf before him, receives and accepts him as her God, King, and all, and with all its strength, fishmits wholly to his power and preatness, in an act of adoration.

Hence we may perceive, that adoration confilts not onely in an esteem of God, be it never so highly elevated, but requires also a voluntary submission of the soul, with expressions of honour interiour and exteriour. He therefore who practiseth as he ought, an all of adoration, desireth alwayes to shew his respect by the essets. As the Sonne of God is infinitely adorable, he who would adore him, strives daily to increase in adoration, and consequently endeavours with great sidelity, to subject himself more and more in will and deed, to the greatness and Soveraignty of securious.

fus Christ. I say in will and deed, for it would avail but little, to fay it onely with the mouth, and to have in thought the name and ineffable greatness of Jesus Christ, if all our actions be full of our own will; and it were to little purpose to subject our felves by words to the Soveraignty of Jesus Christ, to the conduct of his spirit and motions, if in the management of our life, we follow the spirit of the World, living in a continuall defire to satisfie our felves and our own inclinations. This were to fay much, and do nothing. This we must be carefull in, fince many deceive themselves in this kind of piety, which they so easily profess, contenting themselves with the fuperficies, and neglecting the rest. Remember that he, who sayes we must adore God Joh 4.24. in Spirit, said also, we must adore him in Truth.

The second act of this piety, is an act of Oblation, whereby the soul offers her self wholly to Jesus Christ, and renouncing her self, resignes into his hand all that she is, all the power that she hath over her self, over all her actions, over all things, and to make her self the more a servant to Jesus, in a perfect condition, she renounces her own liberty, and all the use she can make thereof, giving it up into the hands of the Son of God, of whom she received it, granting him all the right that

that she had to dispose thereof, to order it as he pleases, that being so resigned to Jesus, she may not have any thing more, nor be any thing more, but that he may be all, have all, and operate all in her. This Obligation thus conceived, is of great importance. For if it be done after the manner it ought, if the Son of God vouchsafe to accept it, it puts us in the perfession of Christianity, in as much as it drawes the soul from her self and all creatures, to be Christ's, to adhere to him, to depend on him in all things, wherein consistent true perfession.

Moreover, this Obligation is an effect of the esteem and belief we have of Fesus Christ, and contains the spirit of Christian subjection. For, as according to Law, the slave is no more his own, nor hath any right over any thing, but is wholly left to the power and pleasure of his Master; so by this Obligation, the Christian puts himself as nothing before Jesus Christ; he gives place to all his rights of nature and grace, to be onely the subject of his power and divine will. And though we are all servants to Jesus Christ by right and purchase, as we said elsewhere, yet we will be fuch also out of good will and affection, giving him by this Oblation, a new power over us, that we may be the Captives to his love, as well as to his power, and submit to the designs of the eternall

eternall Father, who hath delivered us from Col. 1. 13. the power of darkness, and translated us to the

Kingdom of his dear Son.

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Thus examining this Oblation, we find that it is necessary for all those who seek true piety, as containing the effence and grounds of devotion; it puts the foul into a perfect denudation, and makes her entirely dependant and resigned to Jesus Christ, to be led according to his will. They therefore who in their exercises of piety make ordinary use of this principle of devotion, must meigh well what they lay, and consider with what sinceray and faithfulness they proceed with the Son of God. For feeing they leave themselves wholly to him in the quality of fervants, and make profession (mark the word) to have nothing which is not his, and of him, and that by this Oblation, they yeild up all to him, even to the use of their own life and natural liberty, what have they more to think of, but fincerely and faithfully to accomplish what they profes? What have they more to do, but to take care that their life be conformable to what they fay, otherwise they shall be constrained to condemn themselves, and to confess that they have no devotion any further then the mouth, that they deal not fincerely with God and their own consciences? It concerns them to take heed that that is not justly to be attribu-

Part V

ted to them which the Prophet said, Curfed are they that do the work of the Lord negligently. Jen. 48, 102

To these Exercises of interiour piety we may add a third att: Purity of Intention. By this intention, the Christian, who offers himself to God in the manner we have described, begins to refer himself actually to him and to his glory, protesting that in all things, even to the least, and in all his actions, he will have no other intention then the will of the Son of God, and live no longer, nor act any thing but according to the intention of Jesus Christ. Having made this protestation, he demands of him participation of his holy spirit, and prayes him to inspire him with holy and pure dispositions, whereby he may accomplish his actions.

This practice of piety is little known, and perhaps little understood, yet it is necessary for a perfect Christian. To conceive and affect it, he is to remember, that, (as we have said) true piety contains a resignation of the soul to the conduct of grace, and to the spirit of Jesus; and that this resignation is more then a bare simple resignation, for it includes annihilation and unity; annihilation of our own spirit and conduct, and unity with the spirit and conduct of Jesus Christ, to which we resigne our selves. By this act of intention, the Christian annihilates all his desires and intentions

tentions to unite and subject himself onely to the intentions and desires of Jesus Christ, in

fuch fort, as to admit no other.

Hence it may be inferr'd, how necessary this intention is to all those fouls that thirst after true piety; but tomake a fuller discovery thereof, we are to reflect on our own infirmity and incapacity, which is fo great, that we know not what is lamfull for us to defire; and are ignorant of what we ought to demand of God, as not understanding what designes Jesus Christ may have upon us. We must therefore wait till he enlighten us, and inspire us. Now, that we may be in a dispofition to receive this grace, and in a capacity to submit to the conduct of the spirit of God, we must annihilate our own desires, and particular intentions, and give our felves up to those of Jesus, which is that the Christian endeavors to do by the act of intention here proposed. It is the Doctrine of the Apostle, who fays, We know not how to pray as we ought; but the spirit makes intercession for us by groans that cannot be uttered. He who fearches the heart, knows what is the desire of the spirit; he fueth for the Saints according to the will of God. Here we are taught this practice, which shews us that our prayers, desires, and intentions must be inspired by the spirit of Jesus Christ, who knows what God demands of us. More-

Rom. 8. 26,27

Moreover , there is not any thing forces tain, as that the Some of God hath those in tentions and designes upon the life, adions, and heart of man, which are great and worthy himfelf, as being a creature, he hath confecrated by his precious blood, and redeemed by his death and Crose. If there are intentions and designes upon us, as we must not doubt but there are, and fuch as are of great importance, yet unknown to us, is it not reafon we follow them, and confequently, are we not obliged to annibilate all our own defires and intentions, to bind and subject our selves folely to the defires and intentions of the Son of God, who vouchfafes to think of us and entertain himself in forming designes upon us our actions, and all the motions of our life? This is it we endeavour to fatisfie, when we form this all of purity, or unity of intention,

This also shewes how unprofitable, and fuperfluous their employment is, who fill their bearts with variety of intentions, and perplex themselves with multiplicity of thoughts, who conceive defires; and form defignes fometimes one way, fometimes another, (though upon occasions, in appearance, good and profitable) fince they do onely what pleafes themselves. But according to the Principles of Christianity, it were better they kept themselves to this unity, and annihilated all that is,

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of themselves, to be onely in the inventions and designes of Jesus Christ. The Christian therefore ought often to renew this purity of intention, he ought to adore all the designes of Jefu Chrift upon him, and all his divine inventions; he must resign himself thereto, and protest never to follow any other, holding it for a maxime, that we shall not arrive at perfection, nor go to God by the strength of humane reason, or following our own defires and inclinations, but by fubmitting our first to the conduct of Jefus, by a faithfull and fincere adherence to his designes and loving dipositions. This considered, we shall know more and more, the truth of what was proposed from the beginning, that true piety confifteth in adherence to, and a refignation of the foul to Jesus. But we are now to examine the effects of this adherence.

CHAP. VIII.

That an adherence to Jesus Christ by true Piety, makes us partakers of the severall conditions of his life.

The adherence and dependance of Christians upon the Some of God by the first grounds and principles of Christianity, and by the first duty which they profess in the state of grace, obliges them to a holy and ture life, since

fince that, as the Apollo faith, He that it is considered to the Lord is one spirit, that it to say, he is must be of the same spirit with God, and doubtless, if they oppose not the designes of Jesus Christ upon them, this adherence will not vance them to a solid sepermanent estate of perfect piety, and establish them in a true Christian perfection. This may be reduced to three heads.

The first is a subjection of the soul, to the defignes, spirit, and operations of Jesus Christ, a subjection that amounts to a capacity and amplitude, and such as makes the soul capable to receive the communications of God, to be at the effects of his grace, and to enter into a participation of the Estates and Mysteries of the

life of Jefus Chrift.

The second effect puts the soul into a purity of regard and love, which makes her vigilant and saithfull to do and desire nothing but the honour of Jesus Christ; to regard nothing but his pleasure and glory, so as to have no eyes but for Jesus, no more life, but what is consecrated to the honour of his Soveraignty and divine actions. This adherence to, and dependence on the Some of God, raiseth in a Christian a true imitation of his life, and divine vertues to such a degree of perfection, that he becomes a lively representation and image of Jesus. Of these three effects, we must speak particularly, for herein consistent the personal contents of the second sec

fedien of true and Christian piety. We begin

with the full district one is a lad at the full of which by this adherence to the Sea of God, is begotten in us, represents two things, the power he hath over us, and the popular we are in to bear the effects of his power. The power which Jesus Christ hath overus as a particular power, which he acquires by the mystery of the Incarnation, and by all the states & moments of his life; a power that gives him a double right to do in us, and with us, what ever he pleases, a power from which he imprints in the centre of our fouls, the time that we'were first made Christians, an eternall and indispensable power. In a word, it is a power which he established by the Sacramente, and left to the Church; For if we confider them, we shall find, that befides the praces which they communicate to us, they have other extraordinary effects expressing the power Christ assumes over us: For instance; Baptisme gives us grace, and blots out all fin in us, but withall, puts us into a condition of fervice to the Son of God, and imprints in our fouls a character of subjection to the divine power, a character never to be defaced, in bonour of the estate of subjection and service which the Son of God underwent by the incarnation, becoming man, and a fervant, fubjesting himself to the Father, he was always,

and shall be for ever again and coeta the state the Father, and in honour of the gift which the eternal Father makes its of his son, by the incarnation and union of the Word with humanity, and the life of God in man, and of man in God. The same son of God instituted the Sacrament of the Eusbarest, wherein he gives and unites himself to us, that he may were in us, and we in him. By this way of sover and union, he takes power over us to hive and sperate in us all that he pleases, and sliews the power that he hath over our souls, to closely himself thereby, and please himself in the himself in the himself thereby, and please himself in the himself in the himself thereby, and please himself in the himself in the himself in the himself thereby, and please himself in the himself an estate of Subjection, yet such as gives its along

In pursuit of this power, he puts us life an estate of Jubjection, yet such as gives its a least pacity to receive and to bear in us the force of his love, and of all the effects of the life, grace, and mysteries of Jesus Christ, and tore-ceive them according to what manner and time he shall please to communicate them. The son of God desireth nothing so much as to communicate to us liberally his graces, and the many savburs he hath obtained for us, and merited by his life and sufferings, his principal design being to advance us to a participation of the several estates of his life. All he did on earth, all his operations in the world were for our sakes; referring also to our good and advancement, all the greatness of his

Spiritual Trasface. Pare V.

life to got is he, and to full of mercy. Now, if the gottess and designs of the Son of God towards the strains be such, is it not reason they commune in this subjection, and be saithful and significant to receive and hear the effects and estates of the life of Jesus, after what manner he pleaseth? This is a principall point

of Christian piety,

mysteries of our faith acquaint is truth, and discover unto us the hereby the Son of God would adto a participation of his Mysteries, fewerall affects of his life. The Son ecoping man by imprartien takes of the nature of man, of our bend of our fasts, by which he acquires to his nature to advance and approprints it to himfelf after what manner he pleases as by this more of love be took bymore mature upon bim, affurning body and foul, which he apprepriated to himself, and elevated to all the greatness of the divinity, communicating to it for ever the perfon, being life and nature of God. In like manner, in the marks of grace, whereby his divine mysteries are honoured. Jesus chooseth such fouls as he may dwell in by love, or after what manner he pleafeth otherwise, he approprietes them to himself by his grace, he advances

vances them to adherence and union of spirit with him and by a particular indulgence offablifheth them in a communication of his great mess. To this end he applies and employer his power, to which a Christian ought to be most vigilant and attentive, that he may alwayes continue in the subjection he owes to Jesus Christ, to accept, receive, and bear the effects , as to give us his immorta:

of his power.

This Principle of truth and piety, is ground ed upon the common doffrine, that all that 2 Cor. 8,9. Jefus Christ did, he did for us, and all that he is, he is for us. He, faith the Apostle, became poer for our lakes, although he were rich, that by his poverty we might be made richt meaning, that Jefus, being God, became man, and took upon him our meanness, infirmities, fufferings, death, the feverall tonditions of our life, to withdraw us from our mediness, enrich us with his divine graces, and advance us to a participation of the feverall estates of his life, bleffedness, santtification and salvation Hence we may take occasion to consider the preatness of Jesus he is our fulness, in his Eph.1.19. annibilation, in his poverty he sufficeth all; for God gathereth together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. It is the greatness of his mysteries, that they are capable of communication to us, and can admit the fanctification of our fouls, as it is

Gg 4

out glory and happiness to be able to participate of the grace, estate, and mysteries of the life of fesucchrist.

This is the first defigne God hath upon us, when the Son of God living an immortal and trenal life in the bosome of his Father, took a new and mortall life in the womb of the Viren his Mother! He defired nothing fo much as to give us his immortall life, and to abase himself to our estate, to elevate us to a partiespation of his greatness, and the rather, because as he benowed his Father by the several oftates of his new life, his hidden life, his fuffering, poverty, death, crofs, obedience, subjection in all the estates and mysteries of his life! To he will have us to bonow him in parties pating of the estate, spirit, and grace of the fame my feries. For this reason in his Church, and of all qualities and vocations, he chooses fords, and calls them to an establishment in the participation of his fpirit, and a communication of his new life, a life of grace, fuch as is wholby, fingular, and proportioned to the eminence, dignity, and fantity of a Christian calling. All this is an effect of his divine mercies, the fruit of his sufferings, it is our glory to be called and elevated to this happine is, as it is our duty to keep our folves in a disposition and capacity to receive and bear them according to the defignes and intentions of the Son of God;

All

All those then who are desirous to live according to Christian piety, must make it their main business to continue faithfull and himble in this subjection, that they may be ready to no when they are called, and to receive when they shall be rewarded. We come now to the Dispositions whereby this estate may be attribuded.

ver lities of eleat.XI P. A A HOS, the divine qua-

Certain dispositions necessary for the devout foul that would participate of the grace and estates of the life of Jesus Christ.

His estate of interiour piety, which purs the foul into a subjection to the power of Jefus Chrift, and a capacity to receive and bear the graces and estates of the tife of Jefus, is altogether fuirible and necessary for those who leek perfection, as being proportioned and conformable to the designer and order that God hath established in his creatures. In the creation of the visible World adorned and embellisted with so many severall creatures, God hath created Angels and man, to contemplate so perfect a work, to admire the excellen-cies, and to honour the Authour of such miraculous productions. He hath done the like in the creation of the new World, that is the establishment of his Church; wherein Jesus Christ chooseth fouls, and formeth spirits, who

Past V.

who are employed in confidering the works of leve, operated by him upon the Earth, for the Calvation of mankind, and bonouring the Author of fo many Graces. As God hath created a great number of Angels different in perfection and order, and as fome conceive in fecies alfo, to whom he hath given feverall gifts and graces, as well as feverall ranks in Heaven, that they may honour by these diversities of estates & perfections, the divine qualitter and severall perfections of God, for the Sexaphims, as Thomas Aquinas affirmeth, adore by estate and by grace, and contemplate by the light of glory, the uncreated love of God; the Cherubins his wisdom, the Thrones his Stability, and fo of the reft.

The eternal Word having accomplished the inestable and adorable work of his Incarnation, having finished that of our Redemption, and created in this natural World a new World (that is the Church) puts souls into it, who by the conduct of grace, are employed in consideration of the works which Jesus Christ operated on Earth. And amongst the rest, he hath chosen many, who by their severall estates and perfections continually bonour the severall estates of his life, and adore his actions and perfections, humanely-divine, and drainely-humane. This must needs be an undeniable truth; for if the Angels and the Church

Church triumphant are continually and eternally employed in admiring and admire the life, effeter, and Mysteries of Jesus Christ, Shall not her Sifter in the Church Militant, have, the same rights, employments, and duties? It is not to be doubted; and certainly, feeing that love hath obliged the Some of God to these lawnesses, and makes him ours for ever, Cfor he shall be man eternally, and eternally our Jefus, our head and our All) it is but reason that we be alwayes his, and render him perpetual bonour and bomage. This is he that operates in our fouls, this is the effate wherero many are called. It is onely expected, that Christian dispose themselves to participate of this happinesse, and, being called thereto, endeavour to corraspond faithfully therewith. God doth the fame in the regener of his Church, the Some of God making use of his power, hath established therein severall estates; orders, and secreties separated from the common, and from one another, which he consecrates and appropriates to the feverall estates and Mysteries of his tife. Some bonour his solitude and bidden life, others his penance, others his poverty, others his obedience; all adorn and beautifie the body of his Church, and in the diversity of their functions and affates, bonow, adore, and imitate the severall operations and Mysteries of the life

life of Jesus Christ, who distributes his spirit and the grace of his Mysteries to all, according to what manner he pleases. He doth the same in the particular Government of soils, he causes and calls them to elevate and establish them in such estate as pleaseth him, sometimes by sufferings, sometimes by privations, one while by love, another by simplicity and infancy. In a word, he estates them as he so pleases, to be bonoured by them, one and the same spirit, according to St. Paul, working all things, dividing to every one severally, as it pleaseth him. The same Apostle represents this

all are members of the same body animated, enlivened with the same spirit, and yet they have all their several offices and functions particular and different. The ease is the same, saith this hely Apostle in the Government of the Charth, which is the body of Jesus Christ, whereof all christians are members, though all make up but one body, and are animated onely by the spirit of Jesus; yet are they called and employed to particular estates, and in all there is a difference of gifts and operations, but it is but one spirit, and one God who does all in all; they are different estates feets of one and the same principall cause. It is the same Jesus who chooseth the souls to

communicate to them the graces, and divers

estates

estates of his life. How happy is that christian, who is called to this happiness! Herein consisteth the perfection of the soul; as in things naturall we say, that the Creature is most perfect, when it most participates of the being, life, and perfections of God, so in the state of graces, that soul is most perfect, which participates most of the graces, of the divers estates and qualities of the Sonne of God.

This grace and favour, is not for every one, and farre above the ordinary. The Sonne of God doth not call all fouls to a participation of his life, nor alwayes communicates to them the fpirit and graces of his Mysteries. Yet the christian who would live in a solid piety and adherence to Jesus Christ, and would feel the effects of his divine communications, must desire this favour, and earnestly demand it. He must often reverence and adore the life, thoughts, designes, Mysteries, and estates of the life of Jesus. He must offer himself with all his beart, to the power, spirit, and grace, enclosed in those divine Mysteries. In a word, he must carefully remove from his foul, all hinderances and inclinations oppofite to the designes and operations of the Sonne of God. But above all, he must continue constant in subjecting his foul to the power and will of the Some of God. He that will will practife all this, must make these mes

following.

The first is, that the foul always resigne her felf to the power of the Son of God, that he may make in her, and by her, all that he will for his glory. This refignation to be perfett, must be grounded upon a freedom of spirit, a freedom which is the true spirit of the children of God, and confifteth in an estate of indifferency and independency, as to all things as well in the order of nature as of grace, and being subject to God onely by this freedom, all things in the world are indifferent, the foul remaining in a pure capacity of submitting to whatfoever the Son of God will operate in her and by her, giving her felf up wholly to his divine power. This liberty of spirit is the principall estate and first ground of Christianity: for all Christians belong to the Son of God, and are left to his power. One died for all, faith Saint Paul, that they who live, should not benceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them: Teaching us, that as the Son of God gave his life for us, and by his excessive charity delivered himself to the ignominious death of the cross, to do the will of his Father; fo he hath right and power to choose and consecrate us by his grace, & to offer us an Holocaust of sweetness and honour to the glory of his Father, that as he hath been the

2 Cor. 5. 15.

the villim of our fins we may be the villims of his love. Hence it is evident that the Son of God hath power and right to put out fouls into what effore it shall please him, for his glory, be it an effore of life or death, of privation or abundance, of confusion or honour, and may choose out fouls, and advance them to the participation of the mysteries of his life, to render to him particular bomage and fervice. We must then refigne our felves wholly in all things to Jefus Christ. To establish us in this diffosition, the liberty of spirit whereof we fpeak, is absolutely necessary. For when it hath separated us from all things, nay, even from our felves, it puts us into an amplitude and capacity to be all that God will have us to be, and to bear the effects of his grace and power. And therefore the Christian who feeks to establish himself in true piety, and live with fidelity, must endeavour to conform himself in this liberty of spirit, for it is difficult, nay, impossible to adhere to Jesus Christ, to depend on him, and faithfully to receive the operation of his grace; if we are not in this hiberty of spirit, that is an independency as to all things. This is the fpirit and disposition that God requires in a Christian, according to the Apostle, That the spirit we have received be not Rom. 3. a spirit of bondage, but of liberty and adoption.

This first disposition leads us farther, and advances

advances us in the wayes of piety, and puts us into a second disposition, by which we accept with humility and fubmiffion, all the estates and effetts that the spirit of the grace of Jesus Christ shall operate in us, and bear with patience and obedience whatfoever rigour and difficulty we meet with. Having foreceived them, we are also bound by this dispofition, to all according to the quality and extent of grace communicated to us, and to live conformably to the estate whereinto the Son of God puts us. We must remain firm in that subjection and liberty of spirit we speak of. In this use consisteth the peace and liberty of the foul: For example, If God put us into an estate of suffering, we must accept it, and continue therein with patience and submission of spirit, not struggling with the good will and pleasure of God; but all therein and perfift with courage and fidelity. We must do the same in privation, barrenness, and all other estates, wherein the Son of God shall please to put us; which if we do, we shall remain in a true adberence and union with Jesus Christ, depending upon him with fidelity, which is all that piety aims at.

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en This truly is clear, in what mariner foever ince collider to whether in the baconomy of

equity interior, or in the recently of the Church, only things invite and colore us to bonow the

That Christian piety obliges us to submit out histerand actions to the bonour of Christering

world, the first defent he best upon his crea-Here cannot any be ignorant that true wid piety confifts in sendring bonogn sa God, it is out first exercise the duties of Rea ligion and Love, are of fuebia nature that they must necessarily be referred to God bur that of piety obliges us to honour God, and to fee ferr our selves to him, and consequently to the Son of God; For he that heneureth not Jo. 1. 13! the Son, beneuteth not the Fathers husby and obligation more particular greater and more speciall, in as much as by the grace of Christing unity and Principles of true piety we are whited to the Son of God, and adhere to him as men bers to the Head. This adherente doth not onely put us into a subjettion to the pamer of Jefie, but also produces in our fouls a regard of love and benour, a regard that purifies and directs our intentions and actions, not to love or honour anything but Jefus the Son of God, by him to love, honour and serve the Father. Thus the fuft estate of piety, which confiftesh in this adherence; obliges us to referr all to him and to honur him in all things. H line This

his truly is clear, in what manner foever we confider it, whether in the Occonomy of our falvation, or in the regency of the Church, all things invite and oblige us to bonour the Sm of God. The first thing that the eternal Pather requires of us in giving his Son to the world; the first designe he hath upon his creature, is, to oblige them to render to his Son the fame homour which we render to his infruite supreme Majesty. This Obligation is so stress, that even ut his birth he would have the Angels acknowledge and adore him; he sent them from Fleaven to Beshishen to reverence him, not beely in the greatness of his durinty, but it the lowness of our humanity; when conceat dana flable, and taid in a manger. He called thither the Shephords and the Kings, that is neight be as David fayes, All beings foult full before him, and all nations shall serve him. He was no sooner born in the world but the kings of the world came from the Balt, to do him bemage, to lay their Crowns and Scepters at his feet, confeshing that all the greatness of the earth ought to ferve and honour him. The evernall Father fent Angels and men to render hunour to his Son, to adore his divinity bumanized, and his humanity derfy'd. All nations of the world shall affemble, and all men shall come to judgement, that all may bonour the Son, as they ho-

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nour the Father!

This the Son demands of the Father as part of that fruit he expells of his labours; it is one of the righest Jewelli of that Crown which he received upon his triumph by the orefe over the world, fin, and death. Many think it was the meaning of that Prayer to his Father in the day of his sufferings: Fa- Joh, 17. 5. ther, glorifie thy Son, to the end that thy Son may glarify thee. We owe him this banque; for if he humbled himself to our infirmities, and the Shame and ignominy due to our offen. car, is it not reason that we render him the hereir whereof he deprives himself for our fakes, and that we ferve and honour him in a manner wholly particular, feeing he onely of the persons of the most holy Trinity, suffered our contempts and confusions? This exercife of piety, which we here propose as the first obligation we have in the estate of Christie anity holds forth one of the nobleft & most eminent vertues of the Catholique Religion, and one of the highest aftigue of our soul. For, if according to Thomas Aquinas, we are obliged, as foon as we arrive to the use of Reason, to some acknowledgements of God, and a februifion to him, as the Author of our nature, and our good, with much more teafor ought we to fay, that the first thought we ought to have of the Son of God, in relation to piety, is to referr our selves to him as the principle Hh 2 realon

principle of our being in the state of grace. And if we would make use as we ought of the spirit of Christianity, and of the gifts we receive of the Sonne of God, we must employ them wholly to his henour and fervice, in fuch fort, that as Jesus is the Authour of our being, life and actions, he may also be their

object and end.

This is an inseparable obligation, and an indispensable duty. For if the Christian and all that is in him, proceed from the Sonne of God, and is consecrated to him by his death, it followes, that he can neither make use of himself or any thing else, but the Sonne of God; otherwise he might refer his actions to fome other then him to whom they are due, and for whom they are confecrated, which were to prophane the most holy things, and to enjoy the gifts of Jesus Christ against his intentions, which is a facrilegious treason against the divine Majesty. For as amongst men he is guilty of theft, and deferves death, who converts the treasure of his Prince to his private use, to passe away his life in vanities and sports; so is that Christian criminall, who abuses the gifts of the Some of God, and is prodigall of the Treasures of his bounty. That we receive all from the Sonne of God no man can doubt, for of him and for him life is given us, as also motions, fenfe, reason,

all,

resson, repose, health, and sleep, and, in a word,

the use of all things.

These are the Treasures of his Court, for he hath by his travels and sufferings, acquired, and by the price of his blood and life, purchased our lives, our actions, our thoughts, nay even the time which we enjoy. Which having done, his intention is, that we acknowledging his love and liberality therein, should love him, ferve him, and in all things mind his honour and glory. This being so, what have we to do but to follow his intentions, to refer our felves wholly to him, to honour him in all things, fince we have all from him, and that for this end, he gives us also his special graces. In what therefore ought we to employ our time, our life, our health, our repose, and all that we have, but for the honour of the Sonne of God, of whom we have received them, and who continues them for that very parpose.

This manner of rendring honour and homage to the Sonne of God, is an exercise of piety that we ought to persuade all Christians to, and is grounded upon the principles of Christianity, which teach us, that all the effects of grace, be it of God towards men, or of men towards God, relate to Jesus as their principal support, prop and foundation, for it is by him that the eternal Father gives us

Hh 3

all, in as much as he hath chosen the both manity of his onely Some, as an instrument conjoyned to the Divinity, to operate his works of grace in Heaven and upon Eurob. By him he receives the homoge and adoracions of his people, and of all men in Heaven and Earth. Hence it may be inferred, that all is grounded upon Jesus, all subsilts by him, that all may be united to him, and by him, to the Father. Jesus must be the onely object of our

thoughts, resentments and obligations.

Upon this truth, we ought to make often reflections, for God hath subjected the World to our use, and given us his Sonne; the Some I fay, out of an excess of incomparable look, becomes wholly ours, that by a mutuall right we may be wholly his, and by him the Father's, that we may fay to him in prety, as he faid to his Father in love, All that is mine is thine, and all that is thine is mine. Yea my fefus, thou art mine, by thy Incarnation thou art mine, by the Mysteries of thy life mine, thou gavest me thy frit in Buptifine, thy bedy in the Eucharift, thy glory I shall have in Paradife, and thou may it fay truly, that what is thine is mine. So order it then, that I may fay to thee with as much truth and fidelity as thou halt expressed affection in giving thy felf to me, that whatever is mine, is also thine, my being, my life, my actions, my love, all thine, but

but much more truly then my own, for it is; in me but by thee, and for thee, I will then from this prefent, and to all eternity, be wholly thine, and my being, my life and my actions, all that I am shall be ever referred to the nefs be well examinat, you will find violy

Hence we are to conclude, that the first defign and intention we are to have in our devotions, is to refer all our adjons to the glory and honour of the Some of God, to remember him before we think of our felves, to feek his glory before we look upon our own Interests or necessities. Herein the greatest part of Christians at this day are deceived, not onely those who in the exercises of piety, feek the honour and efteem of men, and afpire onely to vanity and a fleshly fairit, but even those who seem to follow the exercises of piety with most love and purity. For they believe they do much in feeking the accasions of merit, and employing themselves in what promotes their piritual advancement, and taking fome relish and enjoyment therein, wheneverthere is occasion, they make it their onely bufinest, their principal employment, it ctakes up their directed aboughts and what is worfe, they often place their end therein, and are perfunded that they have attained a -bigh and perfect degree of piety imagining themselves bich immerits, and far advanced Hh 4 nave

Spiritual Treasure

Part V.

the wayes of perfection, and that they may the God with delight. He is blind who fees not the danger thole are in, who live thus, for while they think they ferce God, they printerally mind their own profit, and if the buffiness be well examind, you will find they change the glory of God into their own particular satisfaction, the end of their exercites, being their own content and interests, of whom we may say with the Apostle, They love and seek themselves, and make a gain of

Piety.

To reform this univer fall and dangerous abufe we must consider, that as the efteem and furle of true piety, confisteth in loving, bonouring, and forving of God, in order to an adherence to him, and a dependance on his divine will; so the motive, object and end, we are to have in our devetions, must onely be the honour, love, and fervice of God, and a complyance with his amorous conduct. The Chricife of true pury must first by a voluntary Subjection, adhere to the power and conduct of the Some of God, as we have already shewed, and further refer himself wholly to the honour and glory of Jefig, in as much as we are his, and by him, God's, and render to God the himser and farties we owe him. Accord-ing to this advise, the perfect Christian must have

have a continual and vigilant care to to order it, that his life and actions may be accounted worthy of Jesus Christ, as being such as shall contribute to his glory after the manner he would have it; which is to be done thus;

stiding its to the and in the power of his first making us to bear the effects of drying mell, in continuity. I'X . I A HO gus he hath over

The Use and Practice of what hath been pro-

TTE have elsewhere taught, what was Voto be done to render our actions worthy of Jesus Christ, it is not necessary to fpeak any further of it. We are therefore only to remember, that all our actions must be Christian, to be worthy of the Son of God, and confequently must be boly; and to be holy, they must be accomplished in the spirit, and by the principle of grace, the Holy Ghoft, the spirit of Jesus; our actions to be Christian, must be done in the spirit and dispositions of Jefus. It remains onely that we fee how we may honour him by our life, by our allions, and in all things; whereof we propose two mays! One is in regard of our felves, when we live and all in a disposition of will wholly submitted and directed towards God, and by right and pure intention, referre our airl'T Telves

felves, and all our adions to the Son of Gods offering our felves fo to him, as not to live or all any thing but for his bonour and glory, The otheris, in regard of the Son of God, when he wouchfafes to apply and bonous himfelf in us, after what manner he pleafeth, causing us to live and att in the power of his fpirit, making us to bear the effects of divine will, in continuing the defigns he hath over us, to take in us his pleasure and glory. According to this later way, the foul acteth not, but accepts and keeps her felf in the regard of the Son of God, as the subject of his divine operations, and therefore must onely be attentive and faithfull to that which he doth in her, and by her, obliging her felf by a submissive acquiescence to all he doth, be it enjoyment or privation, rest or pain, change or destruction, accepting his conduct, and consenting to all the effects of his works in her, out of a considence that he will establish all in her for his plory. This advice, to fouls who endeavour to live in the grace of God, and feek Christian perfection, is of to great consequence, that to fail in this point, is to fail in all. God is in us by grate, he is there to operate, not onely by himself, but by us sofor he is the common principle of life, and uperation in us, it is he that operates there investantly things great and morthy of himfelf. This

This grained, it follows, that the Christian who defines to the in the grant of God, must on the one lide fluin all manner of sin, especially such as may ruine this grace in him on the other, become very accention and faithful to receive the effects of his grace and the operations of the Son of God, that so he may cooperate therewith according to his inventions, otherwise it is to be feared, he may lose it, or at least hinder it's effects, and so destroy the honour of God, and all that the

Son of God hath established in his foul.

This is grounded upon the very principles of faith; For we can do nothing of our felves, as of our felves, but Jefin Christ doth all in us, afting and referring all our actions to the glory of his Futher. We must then let him all, and, as we know not his divine intentions and designes over us, neither know the grace or degree of grace whereto he would elecute us for his greater glory, (for it belongs to him to do all, when and how he pleafes.) It remains then, that we oppose not our felves to his inventions, and defroy not his works. The Christian therefore, who defireth to be God's, and to live in true piety, milt not amale himself in these unprofitable and supersivial chings, nor regard so much thefe exercifes, but purific himfelf, and make himself worthy of the prace of God, taking great

great care to preferve himself therein, and have a continual attention to all that the fririt of grace operates in him, for the glory of God, that he destroy it not by a contrary application and want of co-operation. Hereby we shall see how many false devotions there are, and how many deceive themselves in

the exercise of vertues and piety.

Thefe two wayes of honouring the Sonne of God, may be understood after two manners, whereby we may honour Jefus Christ, and he may honour himself in us two wayes, one by adion, the other by estate. The action is transient, and is but for a little time, and perhaps is but in one part of the foul, but estate is a thing permanent which dwells in the whole capacity of the creature, and is imprinted in the bottom of its being, having no dependance on the actions of the under standing and will. We may act well in the first manner, and it is good, but we must also endeavour to establish our selves in an estate which perfectly honours the Sonne of God, as the Sonne of God. For as the Sonne of God himself hath not onely honoured his Father by the actions of his transitory life, but hath been pleased to become man, and take upon him a nature which effentially is in a condition of servitude, and remain perperually and inviolably therein, in regard of his Divinity: To we must endeavour to honoun the Sonne of God, not onely by transitory actions, but also by a permanent estate and condition, such as may render him bonour and perpetualt homage. This we are obliged to do for our part, to the utmost of our power, as being one of the most effential exercises of piety. But our attempts are feeble, and all we can do is little, in comparison of what we owe God. The Some of God therefore who is our Supplyer, doth it fometimes himfelf by his grace; by his divine and amorous attractions, he calls us, and puts us into the effate which he himfelf operates in us, by which he fatisfies his Fother to his honour and glory. It is a fingular happiness, a favour, to obtain which all we can do, is to continue disposed, attentive to whatever the Some of God operates in us and carefully to take heed thereto, and to co-operate faithfully therein; and with the best disposition, may be proposed. The meaning hereof is, to keep our selves in a simple fubmifion of our first to that of the Sonne of God, and this fubmiffion confifteth in not refifting it, but, leaving our felves wholly to the power of, and a dependance on his boly friest and conduct, giving up, offering and dispofing our felves to the work and defigner which he hath in and upon us, renouncing all our own contrary inclinations. The foul that

that lives in this fubmission, is capable to bear estable to bear of grace, and to heleur God in all things.

Now when tis faid, that we ought to cofer all our adions to the glory of the Some of God, we mean not onely the good and vertur ous, but even the common and natural actions even to a moment of time, for all belongs to God, and must be referred to his baneur and alory. This truth me learn of the Church our Mother, who in her vises and coremonies, doth not onely represent the Mysteries and adi one of the Some of God, but honours them in representing them, and as fuch is her interes tion, whence it may be observed, that in all her ceremonies even to the least, she intends to bonour and achientledge him. Jefus Christ bimfelf may be also an example to us in this exercise of piece, for in that he hath taken the nature of man upon him, he hath bonowed his Father in all things, and by all the concerniments of humanie nature, doing to that end and intention, not onely those adjour which we call Religious and vertuous, but even those which are naturall and puraly humans, and referring to his henour, all the maments of his life. We must carry our selves in the same manner, what he did being done by him, as a Mafter for our imitation. The deciout Christitherefore must refer all his emercifes and actions

actions, both natural and common; little and great, to the bonour and glory of Jefus Christ. By this relation, our offices are ennobled, for what he hath fantlified, is neither common nor inconfiderables whatfoever is confecrated and referred by his bonour, cannot but be great,

when his bonour is fo preat. In months

There are a many that judge this practife of Piery to be too difficult, whereas they will indifferently receive fome others. But if we confider it, we shall find that it is an Obligatimproper to the flate of Christianity, which cannot by any meanes be dispenced with. For if the die of a Christian be a lively Image of the life of fefur Christ, and a tife derived and Rowing from his it must of necessity follow, that, as all things are fandified, and made dis vine in Jefus Chrift, To are they fuch in us by the fame spirit of Jefus, which is given us, which dwelle in us, and operates in us? From which reason we may infer, that, as in Jesus there is nothing mean or vite, but all in him is elevated and referred to the glory of his Father, foin Christian fools, there ought to be no adian mean and abject, no, not indifferent, feeing they all belong to the Some of God, who trath fundtified them in his ferrit, and in the wondered and direction of him it is, that we are to operate and accomplete them. Belides, we cannot doubt at all, but that the Sonne of God

Spirituelle Trebfane : 2 Parti Vi

chy himself over our actions, even to the smalled, may, over all the moments of our life. Which if it be so, how can we say, that our actions are indifferent? On the contrary, they belong all to Jesus Christ, they must proceed from his spirit. God will be his naured in all that is of man. We shall render an account as well of the least as the greatest things, and assuredly, God will exercise his judgement as well for a moment of time, and the least of our actions, as for all the rest of our life.

We must therefore acknowledge there is nothing little, nothing to be negletted in the Pate of Christianity, but all therein ought to be worthy the blood and crop of the Son of God; we must make use of all things conformably to the defigns and spirit of Jefus, who, as he is always great, even in the leaft things, fo also must we have great intentions, even in the meanest of our actions, and our first and principall must be to referr those to the glary and honour of the Son of God. Jefile. Christ in the time of his life upon earth, did for living among us as one of us, he made med of all things with a geal to the honour of his Father, and referred them to him as to his Father, his printipall being and life. Let us do the like, and by a zeal to the honour of Jefter,

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out of a respect and homage to his greatness, let us offer to him all our actions, & accomplish them all even to the least, with a desire that they may be referred to him as to the principle of our being and life in the state of grace. This he taught us by his death, this disposition he inspires its with by grace, this spirit he infuseth into us by the Sacraments which he hath lest to his Church, as himself said, As the living Father bath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live Joh, 6. 17. by me; which include in two words all that we would perswade that Christian to, who seeks true piety.

CHAP. XII.

How the Christian that feeks true piety, is ob-

As we are obliged to honour Jesus Christ by our life, and all our actions, so with much more reason are we obliged to imitate him as far as lies in our power. The greatest honour we can give him, is to conform our selves to his life and intentions. This is the third effect which produces adherence to Jesus Christ; and as this adherence is the first estate whereinto we are put when we are made the christians.

Christians, and the first foundation we must lay to acquire true piety; fo from this adberence as its centre and generall principle must be derived all the effects of grace which we bear in our fouls. Now, that which remains to be treated of, is this Imitation: for our life ought to be a lively Image of the life of Jefus Christ, and the first use a Christian is to make, is to look upon the Son of God as the Prototype and exemplar of his life and actions, not onely to imitate, but to express and represent him, as it were, to the life. As the Son of God is the Image and resemblance of his Father, so must the Christian be of the Son. Hence the Apostle assures us, that none shall be faved, or received into heaven in the number of the elect, if he be not conformed to the Image of Jesus Christ. He predestined them, fays he, to be made conformable to the Image of his Son. In a word, we must be by grace what Jesus is by nature. It is a maxime in Christian piety, that the Son of God is the true life, and true model of our life; it is the example shew'd us in the mountain, as well as to Moses, according to which we are commanded to operate. Our interiour and exteriour life then must imitate and regard the exercises of the soul of Jesus Christ; and the occupations of his facred life. For this reafon the eternall Father gives us his Son in the mystery

Rom. 8.

mystery of the incornation, for giving his Son a new life in the mystery of love, and giving it to be communicated to us, he makes him thereby the principle of a new life in us, and wils, that, as he is the principle of the life of his Son in eternall generation, so his Son should be the principle of our life in the new temporall generation of our fouls by Baptisme and Grace. Saint Paul also teaches this, when speaking of the reformation of Adam, he says, As we have born the image of the earthly, fo fall 1 Cor. 15. ree also bear the image of the heavenly; as if 49. exhorting us to an imitation of the Son of God, he should advise us, that as we have born the image of Adam, imitating him by fin, and following him by our own inclinations, we should also bear the image of Jesus Christ, imitating his life and actions.

This Doctrine is wholly conformable to the Principles of Christianity. The life of a Christia an, honours and regards God, and imitates his life; Be ye perfect, as your heaven Father Mat. 1.48. is perfect, faith Jefus Christ; or to fay better, it is the life of God himself who lives in us by his Son. Whence it follows, that as the Father lives in the Son, and the Sonin the Fotber, so we live in Jesus, and Jesus in us, according to that Prayer of the same Son of God to his Father full of love and affection. 1. and in them, and thou in me, that they may be 10.17. 13.

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made perfect in one. But how can we be one with the Son of God? How can we adhere to him, and be incorporated with him? How can we conceive this reciprocall life of Jefus in us, but in imitating him, and not only imitating him, but expressing and perfectly representing him, fince he lives in us, and we in him, in the mystery of the incarnation? For the eternall Father giving us his Son to be man, and to live with men a life common and conformable to the nature and condition of men, he gives us in him a law, rule, and form of life, and shews us in him the manner of conversation that we must follow, to live Christianly, that is, to live a new life, which the eternall Father gives us in his Son, and by his Son, a life fingularly proper to the eftate and perfection of Christianity. We are then to look on the Son of God as our Law, imitate and follow him as our rule, which is, to speak properly, as the facred Oracles foretold, when, heaking of the Messias, and the time of his coming, they faid, that God will make a Word abbridged upon the earth. This Word is the Son of God, who descending to the vile and mean estate of humane nature, gives us his words and actions a model for ours.

This also Saint Paul explains, where he fays that God spoke to the world four thou-

fand years, and conducted and taught men Heb.1.1,2 after divers manners, and fent Angels, he gave a Law writ with his own hand, he prescribed. many Ceremonies, and in all ages caused Prophets to speak. But in the Law of Grace, he feaks to us by his Some, who teacheth us fupernatural truths, till then unknown to the World, and referved for the Excellency of the state of Christianity. The Angels now guide us no me e, but attend us, the written Law doth not oblige us, the Ceremonies are now limited, and the Prophets speak no longer. It is Jesus, the Word, and the Some of the eternall Father, who becoming man, and conversing among men, speaks to us, and teaches us. He is our Angel to inlighten us, our Law to direct us, our Prophet to speak to us, and our Master to teach us. He is the abridg'd word, and by the condition that he hath made with his Father, he conducts us by his fpirit, he illuminates us by his grace, he directs us by his providence, and as he is the word of the Father, fo he teaches us not onely by his words, but also by the holy and adorable actions of his life, the rule, the Law and modell of our life.

Now if Jesus be the rule and law of our life, it is manifest that we ought to imitate him, if we would live Christianly, and if, by the exercises of a jelid piety, we desire to attain a

Toh. 12.

perfection suitable to the vocation and estate we profess, we must choose none but those which imitate the Some of God, holding it a maxime in all kindes of exercises, that the Christian is so much the more devout and perfect, the more conformable his life and altions are to those of Jesus Christ, and that he is neither devout nor perfect, but as far as he imitates thelife and actions of Jesus Christ, for true piety and Christian perfection, if rightly underflood, consisteth onely in this point.

This Principle and Precept, we have also from Jesus Christ, where he sayes, If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there my servant shall be also; the servant of God must imitate Jesus Christ. To serve is nothing else but to follow, to follow, according to St. Austine, is to imitate; so that the devotion whereby we should serve God, is not devotion but illusion, if it be not in the exercises which cause us to follow and imitate the life

of Jesus Christ.

Here we may see how much they are deceived, who dare call him rash, and accuse him of presumption, that would imitate Jesus Christs who say it is to soar too high, and that it is impossible man should imitate his God, and blinded with this ignorance, are content to employ themselves in some good morall exercises. The Apostle condems this

errour,

leaving as an example that we should follow his in Pet 2.

St. Paul confesses, that his study and principal care was to imitate Jesus Christ; to which end, he writ to the Corinthians: Be ye in Cor. in followers of me, as I am of Jesus Christ. In a word, we are not made Christians, nor participate of the graces of the Sonne of God, but to be put into a capacity and obligation to imitate him. This is his intention when he sayes, who deth not follow him, is not worthy of Mat. 10. him. To say the contrary, is to oppose the 38. opinions of the Fathers, a truth more manifest

then day. librard

By these Principles, we discover another blindness greater then the other, a deceit more dangerous in many Christians, who onely study to perfect their reason, and think they do much to follow that in every point, wherein they are much deceived. For they believe it sufficient to live reasonably and Christianly, and in this belief, forget or neglect the rest, thinking they are arrived to an estate perfect enough. But it is quite contrary, for by the use of reason onely; we live as perfect men, or at most, but as good Philosophers; but if we would live and operate as good Christians and Children of God, we must advance our selves above Reason to live, not a humane, but a divine life, that is the life that the Ii

the Some of God liv'd upon Earth, and communicated to true Christians, the life of the new man. To live this life, we make use not of reason but of grace; which is farre above reason, and must be the principle of Christian actions. For onely grace can bring us to God, and render us worthy of God, that is of God, confidered as the object of

The foundation of all confifteth in this. that a humane spirit and reason is not our condust, nor the rule of our life as Christians; Jefus thrift is the onely rule, law, and principle thereof, wherefore in our exercises of piety, we must have this continually before our eyes, if we would be devout, viz. we must follow him if we would be faved, and we must imitate him if we will follow him. Which we are now to confider, how it is to be done.

CHAP. XIII.

The Practife of what hath been proposed in the imitation of Jesus Christ.

THen we speak of imitating the Some of God, we mean not doing of miracles as he did; we are not commanded to walk upon the Sea, to raife up the dead to life, and to give fight to the blind. We mean not the being elevated to an intuitive knowledge of the fecrets of the Divinity; this is onely for Jefus, these are the effects of his almighty power, and the marks of his Miffion. We are not called to come into competition with him, but, as he was bumbled to our meanness, and was cloathed with our nature, becoming man, and taking a new being and estate; so he takes also a new manner of life, conformable to ours, which we ought to imitate, after which we are to form the interiour of our Consciences, and the procedure of our actions. He annibitated himself in the Incarnation, faith the Apostles he bumbled himself in all the Mysteries of his life; he Phil. . .. made himself poor in all his effates; he was obedient even to the Croffe, he fuffered even to death, he hath shewed his love in all his morks.

two

works. In a word, he practifed all manner of vertues in the progress of his life. Let us do the like; he was born for our Jakes, and all that he did was onely that he might imitate him as the modell of our life. For this reason he chose a kind of life full of various estates, and practifed severall actions, that all forts of persons in all manner of a states, should find in him the Idag of their

actions, and the prototype of their life. Thus to imitate Jefus Christ, is an Obligation

belonging to the state of Christianity. When we receive Baptisme, we are incorporated into him as members; this incorporation doth not onely bind us to adhere to him as members to their head, but to be like him, and to have as much conformity in our actions to those of Jefur, as there is between the head and the members of the same body. So that this imitation must not be indifferent, but most boly and perfect. All as many of you, faith the A-Gal. 3.27. postle, as are baptized into fe Christ have put on Christ, that is, ye bear his Livery, and, as the Doctors interpret it, ye are made like unto bim, ye imitate his vertues, and are followers of his life and actions. For it is but reason, that where the head is, there the members should also be, and that there be a resemblance and conformity of the one to the other. To imitate then the Some of God, implies

two things; the one is, that we do what he hath done, the other that we do it with the fame first and diffositions wherewish he did it. He was bumbled for us, he shewed his love and elementy towards us: Let us also learn of him to be gentle and humble of beart. He was obedient even to death, the death of the Croffe , let us imitate his ebedience, preferring the accomplishment of his divine Ordinancer and holy will, before all things, even our own life. He was born in a flable, layd in a manger, he took poverty for the companion of his life, he condemned the World, and despifed its pride, shewing us, that all is wanty, and a meer nothing in the eyes of God. Let us do the same, and, though we are in the World, condemn its vamity, in a word, fo use it, that all our life interiour and exteriour, may be a continual imitation of the life of Jefus. This is the true piety that a Christian must exercife, the onely meanes to be perfeit. In this imitation and refemblance; confifteth the perfection of the foul, as well in the flate of grace, as of glory. We know that when we uppear we shall be like him, we shall for him as be w, faith Saint John. If then we shall be like him in glory, we must also be like him in grace; for glory is nothing but grace consummated, grace glory com-

But we must not rest here, it is not enough to do barely what the Son of God hath done, we may deceive our felves herein, believing we domuch, when we do nothing of value, because Jesus Christ being man as we are, and converting amongst us; no doubt but we may find some conformity and refemblance to him, even among the micked in the common flates of men; many fuffer and are oppressed, many poor and bambled, many fequester themselves from the pemp of the Court, and live in the obscurity of a solitary life; many fast and pray, and do almost all the exteriour actions, that the Son of God exercised upon earth. He was man as me gre, we are men as he was, but this does not perfelt us, this is no imitation of him, the reason is because it is not enough to do as he did, but we must do it with the (pirit, in the difpofitions, and by the principle that he operates, which few persons mind. It is not enough to do, but we must do it by a principle of grace, not of generall grace, comprised under the common and generall name we give to all the gifts of God, which is an usuall way of speaking, but of grace which giveth us Jesus Christ, communicateth to us his spirit, and puts us into the boly dispositions of his foul. So that doing all things by this principle, we perfectly imitate the Son of God, fo far

far, that our naturall common actions are withdrawn from their meannes, and elevated and united to those of the Son of God, after a particular manner, as being operated by the fame principle, and with the same dispositions. This manner of acting is peculiar to the state of Christianity, and in all circumstances, conformable to the state of grace; for by Christian grace, we are new creatures, creatures in Jefus Christ, as the Apostle faith, and confe- 2 Cor. 5: quently we have a new being and life. Which 19. if we have, we must also have new inclinations, another goodness, and all our actions must be conformable to this new estate, seeing that according to the ordinary maxims, the work is according to the being. Now, as the being we have by Christian grace is wholy divine, elevated, and entirely in Jesus Christ, it followes, that all our actions must be elevated and done in Jefus. For this the Son of God humbled himself to all practices and exercises, to ennoble and fandify them; for according to the Fathers, Jefus entring into the maters in the day of his Baptisme, by his touching them, he fantifies the waters of our Baptisme, and as Saint Augustine faith, be fanctified the world, and bleffed it by his conversation. So by the use he hath made of bumane nature, wherewith he hath clothed himself, and of all the exercises and functions proper thereto, he functify dours, thewing that we may imitate him, seeing he became man to be the rule, some and model of our actions, and not onely imitate him, but express and representation to the life, and be so many Christis, as members of the Son of God. We must be one with him, and consequently must not operate but with him, and in his person, not in our own. For this cause he gives us his spirit whereby we act to or, to say better, he acts all in us; It follows, that they are not so much our vertues, as those of Jesus in us.

Herein appears the great difference between Christian vertues and morall, or humane, For instance, The love God requires of a Christian, must not be that of a Pagen, who loves them that love him, nor that of a Pelitician, who loves according to his humour, or interest, much less that of a sem, who loves not, but out of an hope of reward promised, or a fear of sudgments. The love of a Christian must be the same with that of sesse, that is, he must love with the same love wherewith sesse loves, he must love with the love of sesse, as he must live the life of sesse. Walk in obari-

ty, faith Saint Paul, as Jefus Ebrist hat bleved.
Joh. 13 34 you. The Sen of God himself in the Eve of

his peffion, speaks thus to his Apostles, I give you a new Commandment, that ye love one officer, as I book loved you. To love is no new Commad-

Commandment, this law was imprinted in our bearts from the beginning of the world, but the manner of loving is new; we must leve by the same love wherewith Jefus loved us, his love must be in us. O, how great is this love, how pure, how free from self-interest ! how frong and powerfull, fince, according to the Col.1.21, Apoltle, it is the fame love, which made Jefier to be born, and die for us, even then, when we were his enemies, and fin raigning in us. The Son of God gives us a cleer testimony of this truth, speaking to his Father, I have Jo. 17.16. declared to them thy Name, and will declare it. that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them. Expound as you please these words, you shall always find it most true, that Christian love, must be the fame love with that of Jefus Christ; and that what we fay here of love, we must judge the like of all other Christian vertues; for, as we have alwayes faid, Jesus is our vertue, our frength, our life, and our All.

To posses this vertue in an eminent degree, as Christianity obliges us, we must acknowledge that this favour is not for all, and that it's not enough to have grace in the manner we commonly speak, but we must have Jesus Christ in us, we must have his spirit, and holy dispositions, that we may imitate Christianly, and express his vertues and life.

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The Christian pherefore who would acquire devotion, and do the exercifer thereof. must list of all purify his heart, and conferve it in that purity, and subject the motions and thoughts of his faul, that Jefus may dwell and of in him. To diffe him to this favour, he maft often elevate his thoughts and heart, to. the Son of Cod, and demand of him part of his friit, and hely dispositions, to accomplish Christianly and perfectly all things. And because the actions of the Son of God are so many springs and principles of grace, a grace which he merited and communicateth to us, we must bind our felves to this grace, we must adore it, we must defire it, and demand it of him in all things, and in all our exercifes; that our actions may be done in him, by him. and for him, according to his designes. This advice is further to be observed, that in the practice of vertues, that we defire them not principally and onely for the love of them; nor acquire them because they are conformable to Reason's or because they bring fome excellency or benefit to the foul. For though vertue be feemly and profitable, and of it self much to be defired, yet it it not enough to defire to be vertuous upon these grounds and principles, fince this feems to favour of the covetou nes of Adam, & to live in his firit, which onely aimed at elevation, and

Part V. Spirituall Treasure.

to make himfelf a little god, or to fall into the corruption of felf-love, which follows only it's own interests, profit and satisfaction. To all purely, and live in the exercise of Christian piety, all must be done in the regard of God, for love of him, and for his bonour. We must feek and pradife every vertue, and exercise of devotion, chiefly, to render our selves conformable to the Son of God, to imitate and please him. And as the first grace that God gives us in the Church by Baptifme; is to make us his children, to incorporate us in Jesus Christ, as members, and to put us into an adherence to him; fo the first & principall care of a Christian must be, to conserve and perfelt himself in his adherence, and to submit to the effects thereof. Herein confifts the happiness of our souls, and essence of true piety, which is all we have to propose in this Subject. But as all things have their contraries, and man is in a land of bostility, fo he must expect to meet with great opposition in the way of vertue, and encounter enemies on all fides, and dangers at every ftep, we shall direct how to defend himself against them.

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CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Temptations and Oppositions happening in the way to perfection, and the exercises of Piety.

7E belong unto God by the power of his divine essence; we are obliged to him by reason of our indigence, we depend on him by the condition of our being, his omnipotenty gives him an absolute power over us, and the immensity of his divine effence, makes him present in us more intimately then light in transparent bodies, which it penetrates and illuminates, more then the foul is in the body which it animates and governs. Our wants oblige us to a dependance on him, and union with him, because we cannot be without his continuall influence, and consequently we must more absolutely depend on his conduct, then the beam doth on the Sun, from whom, if it be but a moment separated, it loseth it's being. So is our estate inseparable from God, it must he always dependant on, alwayes adhering to him, according to Saint Paul, In him we live, move, and have our being, which words represent our intimate union with God.

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In the like manner, in the estate of grace, we are abliged to be God's, and depend on him; we cannot operate any work of places tion but by him, and unless he be united to our fouls by grace, that is, unless his boly forth dwell in us, operating in us all the good works which may contribute to our falvation. Without grace we can do nothing, by Christian grace God dwells in us according to the proand make our dwelling with him. By grace God enforceth himself into the foul, working an immediate union with her, and dwelling in her as his fanduary and empire, whence he diffuseth amorous effects, and operates in her according to his divine will, with fo much bounty, as if the infinite love of Jefus had fie other thing to do, but to procure and fur-ther our falvation by infinite ways.

But belides this of grace, there is yet an other union whereby we are united to God,

But belides this of grace, there is yet an other union whereby we are united to God, and incorporated into Jesus Christ, and by him have a relation to God, namely, that which is wrought by the Sacraments, in which he preserves us by his love, and by the power of his spirit. For this reason he gave his life, and shed his blood on the cross, to give us a new generation in Baptisme, he bestows on us his body in the Eucharist, that by so many favours and obligations this union might remain persect

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and folid, and we by so powerfull and legitimerea Title might be his in an indiffensable, many graces, and fuch divine and effectuall means united to God, it should seem imposfile that any thing could be firing enough to break fo many tyes, and divide that which the power and love of God had joyned together. But, O deplorable condition t the creatures and the Devil are strong enough to feparate us from Jesus Christ, and to extinguish in us his holy spirit and grates and which is worle, the malice and depraved will of man is of it felf strong enough to obstruct the influences of this liberall love, to frustrate it's works, to make us retire from our dependance on this conduct. The perfect Christian must therefore have a vigilant eye, and not fuffer himself to be deceived in an affair that concerns his eternall falvation, which that he may do, we will discover the snares laid for him, that he may avoid them.

There are four things which continually feparate us from the Son of God, and force us to ruine, if his grace prevent us not. The first is our own nature, prone to evil, being taken out of nothing, it hath an inclination to that nothing, whence it came, to re-enter thereinto, and would infallibly return thereto, if the arm of God, who created it, did

not withhold and fustain it. Nay, this evill inclination of our being would not onely return to nothing, but to a nothing that is rebellious against God, that is, to fin, which hath no other Originall, but (if we may so express it) the meanness of our being, which annihis lateth all that God puts into us. The creature being drawn from nothing inclines to evill, if grace stay him not, faith St. Gregory. This is evident in the fall of Angels and the first man, which can onely be attributed to this nothing whence they were drawn, and which by a fecret power, attracts them to it felf. For before fin, there was not in these two natures any perverse inclination. But if this were in two natures so perfectly accomplished, what ought not we to fear who are not onely in this nothing, but after a manner much more miserable, without light, without grace, in a depraved nature; by the evill inclinations of our being, we have in us the fource of all evills. The fences and thoughts of the heart of man, as the boly Text faith, are inclined to evill Gen.6.5. continually, which ought continually to humble us at the feet of the Sonne of God, calling upon him to fustain and preserve us, and never to suffer us to be separated from him.

The inclinations, and evill habits that are in us, the effects and estates of original sinne, Kk 3 which

which are fixt to our nature, and felf-love therein are the fecond enemies which continually endeavour our ruine and feparation from God. The neason is, that our own inelinations and nature are easily fix'd on created things, as being of the same order and condition. These applications are defective, and divide us from God, but the greatest evill proceeds from this, that our nature is subject to the Law of fin and tyrannicall concupiscence, as long as we live upon earth; it is subject to the ourfe and power of fin, as being the nature of Adam, a curfed rebellious nature, wholly opposite to Jesus Christ. What therefore proceeds from so bad a beginning, which of it felf can produce no good, is not onely to be suspected such, but, partaking of the quality of its fountain, separates us from God, so that those who follow the motions and inclinations of the flesh, are im-Rom 8. 8. mediately divided from God. Those that are in the flesh, faith St. Paul, cannot please God, and doubtless, the more they follow their own inclinations and defines, the more they are separated.

The Christian therefore who would be perfect, and begins to live in the exercises of true Christian piety, must oppose and annihilate his motions and inclinations, or at least not follow them, for they are the inclinations of the

the man Adam, but must comply with the inclinations of Jefus Christ, that is, refign himself to his divine conduct, who rules us by his providence, affifts us with his grace, and alls in us by his fpirit. Where, the best remedy against this danger, is to preserve our selves in an adherence and dependance upon Jesus Christ, who by the mercy and power of his fpirit, can suppress the tyranny of fin, and preferve us from the dominion it usurpeth over us, as over a nature it hath a right unto. Hence the boly Scriptures call the Son of God, him, that eafily taketh off the yolke of fin; he alone by his grace, fortifies our fouls, making them able to refift, without being engaged therein, the power of sin, to defend them from its violence. By this it appeares, how much it concerns those who exercise themselves in true Christian actions, to acquire folid piety, that they may depend on, and adhere to Jesus Christ, seeing that if they do not, they are the flaves of fin, and chain'd to their own inclinations, which feparate them from God.

The third of our enemies is the World which conspires our ruine, and, by the hate it beares to Jesus Christ, continually endeavours to separate us from him, either deceiving us by its allurements, or discouraging us by derision and opposition, or forcing us from our duties by

Kk 4

Joh.7.7.

2 Tim. 3.

persecution: for hating Jesus Christ, it consequently perfecutes all his. The World hateth me, faves the Son of God, because I testifie of a, that the works thereof are evill. And if the World hate him with an irreconcileable hatred. it can do nothing leffe then feparate us from him, and diffivade us from all that may be pleafing to him. The Apostle affures us, that all who will live godly in Christ Jefus, must suffer persecution. This they must all look for, who defire to ferve God, and exercise themselves in true piety, affuredly, the World will arm it felf against them, using all manner of infinuations, allurements and importunities that may be, and practifing all the artifices it can to feparate them from Jesus Christ. This persecution can never cease, for the hate shall endure for ever, which should engage the Christian to look upon himself in this World, as exposed to the malice and surprises of his mortall enemies. He must therefore prepare himself for danger, wherever he is or shall be while he lives, and following the Counfel of the Son of God, he must watch and pray, least he be overcome by these asaults, and surprised by those many dangerous temptations.

Mat. 26.

When we speak of the World, we include all the creatures whereof it consists; they all separate us from Jesus Christ, not onely by the all use we may make of them, but in some

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manner by the lawfull. This is manifest, for the more the foul is united to, and employed in the Creature, the greater diffance is there between her and her Creator. The creature hath an attractive power to withdraw us, and we have an inclination which carries us thereto. whence we may eafily be deceived by it, even in the lawfull use thereof, either by adherence or engagement, by complacency or satisfaction, and a thousand other wayes. Befides that, every Creature being fubject to change and vanity (they are the words of the Apolle himself) it must necessarily imprint in our 10. fouls inconstancy and vanity, which is much to be confidered, especially by those who seek perfection. We must therefore hold it a certain Maxime, that the more commerce we have with the World and the Creatures, the more we are feparated from Jesus Christ; the more we are taken up with the creatures and our felves, the leffe we are with Jesus Christ. Which if it be so, may we not justly fay, the Earth is covered with our enemies, and that we are in a place of combat and temptations, and that every where is danger? It concerns us then to walk with great vigilancy, and continuall humility, for on every fide we fee nothing but ambufbes to furprise us, every where fnares to entrap us. Adam was tempted even by an Apple; we have all objects of temptation, his was onely exteriour,

exteriour, ours interiour, the fource of all our fine, is in the bottom of our curfed and rebelliour nature. Wherfore let us live in fear, and have continuall recourse to him who can perfelf us, fesus Christ, the Redeemer of our souls, robo exposed himself to temptations, saith the

Apostle, that he might succour those that are

tempted.

Our fourth enemy is the Devil, who endeavors nothing fo much, as to separate us from God and Jesus Christ; he makes use of all creatures, even our felves to ruine us. The hate he bears to God, the envie to our happiness, and his obstinate malice, makes him match continually about us, to make us sharers in his mifery and torments, and to separate us for ever from our only felicity, Jesus Christ. The more we feek vertue, and endeavour to do wel, the more he strives to divert us. When we are employ'd in good exercises, he either withdraws us from them, or disturbs us in them, and incessantly makes we of all things, even vertue it self to make us lose vertue. Sometimes, as Saint Peter faith, he goes about like a roaring Lion to devour us: sometimes he comes Pet.s. 8. like a Fox to surprise us. He follows us every where, and with a malicious fubtilty, ftrives to vomit forth his pay fon to infect our purest actions. In fine, he gives not over, till he hath gain'd or overthrown us by his violence, or enflay'd flav'd us by deceit, or at the least wearied us out by continual importunities. In a word, there is no Artifice he makes not use of, no place or employment that he finds not out, no sin or action where he is not present with us, to ruine or torment us. What shall we do then in the midst of so many perplexities? Where shall we find a sanctuary and secure refuge? How shall we avoyd such manifest dangers, and defend our selves from the cruelties of so powerfull an enemy? This we must needs know, and therefore must not for sake our perfect Christian, till we have given him directions how to behave himself in such a condition.

CHAP. XV.

In what Disposition the Christian ought to be, that he yeild not to such temptations as occur in the exercises of piety.

Hey are deceiv'd, who think piety grows among Lilies, that the way to perfection is strew'd with flowers, who imagine nothing but sweetness, and that a good inclination, or an easie nature can bring us thither; that devotion is a land flowing with milk and hony, and consequently, that there is nothing difficult; which yet they are the sooner peswaded

ded to, in regard that in all their exercifes, they onely feek certain felf-fatisfaction, uling no sidence, but fastening only upon this, That it is fufficient for a man to do what be can. There are others on the contrary, who look on the exercifes, of piety, as fo rigorous, painfull and friff, that they will hardly hear them spoken of, but fay of devotion, as the fenfuall Jews did of the land of promise, it is an ill countrey, inhabited with giants, that devour strangers. See here two different sentiments, in extremes, and confequently faulty, both deceive themselves. To remedy this, we may fay, that Devotion is indeed a Lily, but growing among Thorns; Piety hath it's thorns, they prick, it may be burt us, but these thorns are loden with Roses. As

dis, but thele thorns are fodel with Rojes. As Moses found God in the burning bush of thorns, fo the Christian finds God and piety in travells and conslicts; as it is the life of Jesus, so it is the life of our souls, to believe otherwise, were to flatter our selves. Devotion hath great privileges, piety hath a power to bring us neer to God, to honour and serve him, but it is with labour. Sin sets us at so great a distance from God, that we cannot return to him without much pain. And yet it is certain, there is much content in this travell, for the grace and help of God is alwayes present, which will never fail us, as lang as we dispose our selves to recive it. In this respect devotion is all sweetness, seeing we

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are able to do all in him who comforts us. St. Paul faw all this, and knew the travels we must undergo, and the bazard whereto we are exposed, when he discovered to the Ephesians their enemies, and arms them on every part to defend themselves : Ye strive not against flesh Eph. 6.12 and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. It is to us he speaks, the life of a Christian is a perpetuall warfare; this world is a land of perpetual hostility, wherein we cannot be fecure, for Heaven it self was not free from contention in the fall of the Angels, nor the Son of God when he dwelt in the wilderness. Now, to understand the dangers we are in on all sides, let us reflect on what was said in the precedent Chapter, and we shall find how we ought to stand in fear, and are obliged to have a great vigilancy to foresee the designs, and discover the fleights of the Devil, and to shun the deceit of self-love. In a word, to overcome the difficulties and temptation which we continually meet with in all exercifes of this life; in few words thus:

Humility is the foundation of all vertues, the fanctuary of the devout foul, in all the nazards and difficulties of this world. The first Diffo-

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fition whereinto we must enter for covert in all dangerous encounters, is to keep our felves in profound humility, looking on our felves as Subject unto all kinds of mifery which separate us to powerfully and to continually from God! To continue in this disposition of humility, we are to confider on the one fide, the infirmity and inconstancy of our nature, on the other, the inclination we have to evil. This confideration is enough to annihilate us. This disposition to of humility keeps us in fear; this fear puts us into avigilancy, that we may have an eye open to all things, left we should do any thing that might separate us from God, or displeasehim, and by humility we attract the protection of God (for the truly humble cannot perish) and obtain his grace and light, which makes is know, and avoyd the temptations and subtilties of our enemies, as Saint Paul faith, Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withfland the deceits of the Devil.

This Disposition obtain d, which must be continuall in our souls we must demand of God that he would be pleased to annihilate in us the evil inclinations which separate us from him, and place in their room a powerfull inclination towards him, the centre of our being, the life and perfection of our souls: for our inclinations proceeding from the old man, who is contrary and rebellious towards God;

can have no power to lead us to God; nothing can bring us to him, but he himself. Now fince that by the exercises of piety, we must benour God, and refer our life and attions to him, it must necessarily be by a principle of God, and by supernatural inclinations. For this reason we fay that the Christian, who feeks true piety, must quit his own inclinations, and, quitting them, demand those of the Son of God, that we may act by their motion and principle. O. therwise it is to be feared, that all these exertifes of piety, are rather naturall and humane, then supernaturall and christian, which makes many deceive themselves in their daily devotions. But for as much as it is very interiour and insensible, and that reason and sense can nothing affure us therein, it is very requisite that the devout Christian should establish himself in grace, and live in a great dependance on, and true adherence to Je. Christ, after the manner formerly infifted upon. For all our goodnes, all the grounds of true piety and perfect Christianity, confift in our being God's, and depending on him.

But we must shew more particularly, the uses and practises we are to make use of in the temptations which ordinarily accompany a Christian life, and the exercises of piety; for to be tempted is the way and conduct of God over his Church, and over all souls, and was a part

of the life of the Son of God. It must also be part of the life of a devout soul, and we must not doubt but God hath great designs upon them whom he puts into this estate. Wherefore it concerns us to know how to make use of it, and to learn how to gather strength in weaknesse, and perfect our selves in temptation, since vertue, according to the Apostles is made perfect by weakness. Thence she receives lastre, God purifies us by contradictions and subversions, he confirms and assures us by temptations. Let us see how we may passe through this fire without burning.

CHAP. XVI.

Of temptations, and the advantages a Christian ought to make of them.

THE first advice to be given in this point is, not to be over-confident of our selves, but to believe that we may be easily tempted; while we are mortall and subject to the Law of sin, and tyranny of concupiscence, we shall alwayes have something to fight with. There are a many who think they are in no danger of temptation, who yet are very deep in its for either they are guided by their own natural inclinations and motions, and yet believe they do nothing but by the motions

of grace and conduct of God, or they are feduced by felf-love, and perfinaded they are full of the love of God, or haply, are deceived by false apprehensions, thinking themselves well advanced in the sight and truths of God. These are great temptations which yet have the appearance of solid vertue, when indeed the

estate of such is very dangerous. We worken

The greatest part of Christians think thems selver free from temptations, when they feel . not the violence of them; it is not that they are not tempted, but the temptation hath feiz'd on them, and raigns in them. Whence they fay they are in peace when they are most tyranniz'd over, and most enslaved by temptation; the evill is the more dangerous, the leffe it is known. For this reafon we fay, the Christian must alwayes take heed to himself in temptation, and easily believe it, that he may the better fland upon his guard, for our nature is corrupt and infirm; our inclinations stray from God, the spirit of the world is opposite to Jesus Christ, and our enemies fubril and powerfull, watching alwayes for our ruine. This consideration should not perplex us, but keep us in humility and continual vigilancy. The fight of the danger wherein we are should cause us every moment to cry out and require help of the Son of God, our protedor and refuge in tribulations, and

I Cor. 9.

and anguifbes of foul. When we find our felves in temptations, we are prefently obliged to get out of them; it is not fufficient not to confent thereto, and to be willing to submit to the effects of the evill spirit: but we should endeavour to destroy the temptation as far as we can, if it arise from within us, and iffue from our own nature, we must curb it as St. Paul did, I keep under my body faith he, and bring it into subjection. For in fuch temptations which must often make use of fasting, watching, prayers and austerities, we must oppose our selves, fight against our inclinations, destroy our evill habits, curb our lufts and affections, forcing them from all objects as much as possible. In brief, we must ase vielence against our selves, delicacies are indeed the effects of self-love, and the fuel of temptations. If we would free our felves from temptation, we must take away the cause, for when there is a correspondence between our nature and our enemies, our fouls will at last be yielded up unto them.

Let men commend these serenties of devotion as they will, and preach up the goodness' of God, yet if it be true that vertue must be bought, that we must crucifie the old man, and destroy him, not sooth and cherish him; if according to divine and humane Lames, he that will overcome and gain the Crown, must

1 Cor.9.

fights

fight; if wraftlers, as St. Faul faith, to gain a transitory honour, and fading oroun, deprive themfelves, and ablain from all things, what we do, who (as Christians) hope for a crown maft of glory & immertality? We must fight, appele, and fubline our selves if we will briumph over temptation which is bred in us. But if the temptation be from the Deall, we must then oppose it the more couragiously with a Christian generality. For if he find us ramis, he will trike home, & overcome us. To a faithfull confident foul, he is no more then a Fly, to a feeble and comardly, fierce as a Lion. Refift the Devil, and he will flie you, faith St. James. Jam. 4.7.

As to discover, fo to vanquish and destroy temptations, we must live in great bumility, and above all, take heed we trust not too much to our own courage, or good resolutions; on the contrary, we must distrust our selves, and confide only in God; for we should be overcome in any (ever fo fmall) temptation, if God by his grace, did not affelt us, if he gave us not his light, we should not so much as know them. Wherefore we must always fay Mat. 8. 24. with the Disciples, Save us, O Lord, or me periffe. We must often call upon the spirit of Jefur, and the grace of his mysteries, to give us firength in our weakness, and light in the darkness of our spirit, who was bimself tempted.

that he might overcome us, that in the tem-

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Ephef. 6.

ptation of Jesus, we might find strength and grace, fufficient to preferve and fave us in all manner of temptations. This Saint Paul meant, when he faid, Take unto you the armour of God, that ye may relift in the evil day. It belongs to the Son of God to give us the armour, that is, to give us strength, and grace to refift. To obtain this favour, the Apostle particularly recommends Prayer to us, faying, Pray alwayes, with all prayer and supplication, in the spirit, and watch with all perfeverance. Thefe words are to shew with what importunity, devotion and fervour we are to pray. And truly we have need, when the perills are to great, our enemies to powerfull, and our forces fo small. In the time of temptation, it is not requifite to fight hand to hand, much less to dispute with it, to reason with, or examine it, or to force it away by violence; this were to attribute too much to our felves; for many times to examine it, is to entertain it, and to strive to oppose it too neerly, is to become fastened to it ; and by disputing with it, we are overcome. It is more to purpose, that as foon as we fee the temptation, we turn our thought some other way, and look upon it with contempt and derifion. We must neither

hearken to the Devil, nor speak to him; nothing puts him into greater fury, then to see himself flighted; nothing pleases him more, then to heed and regard him, for so we give him access, and in a manner, enter into acquaintance with him, This is one of his ordinary subtilties, whereby he deceives even the most wary, yet we take no beed of it. The devils intention in all this, is to amufe and entertain us; the objects he lays before us, are not always evil; it is sufficient for him, if he but fee us hearken to him, that he may by little and little enter into discourse with us, which once done, he will foon instill his poyfor into us. Which way fover it is, his drift is to turn us from God, that he may have the diffofall of our hearts and fpirits s, that is enough to deceive even those who make profession of folid piety, and much faithfulness in the ways of God. It is no small evil to turn away from God, to regard and examine a suggestion and conference, that the devil would have with our fpirits, although we should do it to a good end, with an intent to drive him away. For it is to heed the devil, to hearken to him, and by a strict examination of his suggestions, to conferre with him; it is to withdraw our hearts and thoughts from God, to employ them in what the devil proposes.

To avoyd all these impurities, and to keep our selves from danger, we must bear the temptation without enclining to it; we must Spit at the devil, Slight all his affaults, and above

above all, wieldraw our eyes and thoughts from all the proposes. This is the bortest and most easie way in all kinds of temperations For we stall find, that temptations stay in us, because we entertain them under presence of driving them away, and examining them, It is enough we be watchfull, and as foon as we have discovered the tempeation or suggestion on of the devil, to renounce and defpile it. But there are forme temperations that arife from objects or occusions, in which case we must onely avoyd them, and from all that may divide us from God. There are others that are wreent, and make lively impressions upon our spirits, upon divers matters, which would be long to explain. In these cases we must not regard the temptation, but God init, as fob did, when he was most tempted, and afflicted: The Lord giveth, and the Lord takethaway; fo we, when preffed, must cost our felies at the feet of Jefus Christ, and offor our selves to him, that he may amultiry, or keep us from consenting thereto. We must implore his mercy, for there are such pressing temptatirus that there is need of the greatest mercy of God to deliver us from them. We must therefore cry out with bumility, and, as much as we can, enter into fome conference and application of spirit with the

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the Son of God, acording to the flate and fliength of our foul.

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DUT if we have not the power to elevate Dour felves to God, if the foul be fo bound by his fecret conduct, that we are fenfible of our being for faken to a generall impotency, we must cast our selves upon God, and having done what we can, (though ever to little) temploy the rest of our forces in offering our felves to the designes of God over us refiguing our felves absolutely to his conduct, and with a spirit of confidence be concent to bear; and patiently fuffer the estate wherein we are. Or if our foul can apply her felf to any object, the that benow the meakneffer and temptations that the Sonne of God vouchfafed to fustain upon earth, and shall implore his first and grace, that the do mothing in this eflate of weakness and temptation, that may displease him. But if our fouls be reduced to an absolute impotency, she must remain therein with dependance and bumility of first: there is nothing elfe required, then to take care that we never regard the LI 4

the temptation, but bear it with bumility and patience. Observe that it must be born with humility; for though we confent not to the evill or temptation, though affifted by the grace of God, we bear it with much patience, and with a spirit of sufferance, yet we ought to annihilate and humble our selves! because the evill is in us, and we are joyned to the temptation. This point is the more to be confidered, because herein the Devill deceives many, and by a malicious dangerous deceit, runs them out of patience, and brings them into much evill, whence they cannot withdraw themselves without a particular mercy of God. To comprehend this fecret, we must note that the spirit of sufferance and temptation, is an Evangelicall and Divine Efate, and we fay ordinarily, that it is a mark of God's Elect, an effect of the residence of Jefus Christ in us, an infallible fruit of love, the last draught of Christian perfection. Hence the foul that is arrived at this estate, is looked on as a chief work of Grace. Now the Devill who matcheth us every where, and circumvents even the best, fails not to fit his poyfon here, if he can, and will, (if fuch fouls do not amibilate themselves by profound bumility) infallibly deceive them. He makes them eafily enter into an esteem of the estate wherein they are, and insinuateth a vain confidence

of themselves makes them believe they are well advanted in Vertue, and much in Gods favour slinde he humbers them among his friends, and treats them as those he loveth belts in Thus by degree he brings them into any farm of themselves and their vertue, and having infuled this poylon into the heart, and put the foul into this belief, it is easie for him of a decreate as he pleases of the will with it, to decreate as he pleases of the rather trans.

The Devilhath another Reight more dangerous and deffe known, which is, when he change chimical into an Angel of comfort, and (pirit of timpolations) even henwho giveth temptations, and appresses us with fubversions, gives us at the fame time frength and address to defend our felves : he fuffets himfelf to be nanquished. He who suggested the evill thought and deed, inspires patience, and an extraordinary refignation | making us feel a courage and a define to fuffer. Not that those of fells are folidand permanent, nor that he defires we should do well therein, but to deceive us, and put us into an efferm of chir felver, and our vertue, and into a dangenous confidence, that to God may leave us .. He knowes nd estate is more batefull to God or more opposite to his grace and conduct, then the el frem of our felf. It is therefore expresly re-

recommended to the singlish who would be faved from the substitute of the Devill, that he be alwayes in year) a filial few land that in the semptation a self-sim his greatest patients and refiguration he hides himself in his nuthing; and keep himself in a profound he mility; for that is the Santaney of the fool, Eph. 6.16. pofile fayes, the fabile and flery days of the Bevill, at the Him of sanwob or at some or

But what if after all this the compension remain, is it not lawfull to endedour to get out of it, and to befeech God to deliver us from it? The most perfect with never do to sthey having given up themselves wholly to God's divine conduct, will here also leave themselves in the hands of Godg without daying any thing, for they think of nothing but foffer. mg, feeling it is Gods pleafure and their practife to emphilore and hamble themselves, being affined he will meser for lake those that he has not his in compation. The devoir Obrafia. who walks headfally in the way of versue fee les noi support or repose in any thing, or mouses himself about it, or omitteth the least of ins exercises, or loofeth the peace of his foul, or ferenity of his look. On the conmany, he is memated in this combate, he defies his enemie, and derides him and all his works, addresting himself wholly to God who is his

Part V. Spiritual Treasure

love and sup THE tenders him thanks, and absolutely refront himself up to him, to bear as long as, and in what manner he pleafes? the temptation and affering he is in. There is a way to make a further propress in this estate. Some fouls there are (which will kaply feeling incredible), who have heither defire nor thought of imploring Gods affiftance? not but that they know the need they have there of, but they are to desored to God, to perfeelly relighed to his divine will, that if God would deftroy then, they would be content, to great a thing have they for the clory of God, so great a defree to suffer, that they are To far from receiving, that they do not to much as think of demanding help, their the gard Being Barely and fimply in God. Belides they know the love and infallibility of God, faithful in his promiles, never forlaking those that are his. By this trath they are poffesed and excited. Off the other fide, they to pures ly and absolutely refign themselves to the will of God, that they never mind whether they suffer or are in danger, it is enough for them that they do nothing to difflease God, and know that they are Gods, and God wholly theirs.

But this resignation is onely in some few; we will not say, but it is permitted sometimes to demand help of God and man, not to be

Spiritual Treasure. Pan V.

absolutely freed, (that were haply to go be wond the conduct and designer of God) bur for frength and direction in Temptation. For example. If a Christian through want of light, courage and ftrength, find himfelf fail, it will be very requifite that he speak with his director, demanding his advice in an Affaire of so great consequence; and so much danger. In these anguishes he must elevate his heart to God, call upon him, and earneftly implore his affiftance; this is not forbidden. On the contrary, it is necessary, fo it be with this condition, that the will of God be accomplished in him, and his good pleasure fulfilled, and that his recourse to God be not forced by any secret impatience, or irrefiguation of his foul. In that case it were to yield to the temptation, to commit an extraordinary impurity, and prejudicial infidelity. But to run unto God to demand firength and conduct, with refignation and patience, is that which is promised to all Chiftians.

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CHAP. XVIII.

Divers Uses that may be made of Temptation.

7B must observe well what hath been faid upon this occasion. The Christian who would live in the exercises of true piety, must greatly esteem this way of combate and temptation, for it is noble, and works great effects inthe foul, which the may meet with in all the exercises of humane life, fince in all we are to fight against the imperfections, failings, impurities and malignities, which fecretly infinuate themselves into her. But we must chiefly esteem thereof, because the Son of God hath great designes upon our fouls, and operates great things in them by these wayes of temptation, desertions, and refignations, Wherefore it concerns us to know how to make use thereof, that we cooperate with the designes of God, and receive, as Saint Paul faith, Cum tentatione Cor. proventum. For the Son of God, who is faithfull, and permits us not to be tempted beyond our frength, gives ordinarily with the temptation, particular graces, and communicates himself; though in a hidden manner, yet truly to the foul that receives them.

them as the ought, it being most certain, that in the wayes of piety, God communicates himself, more ordinarily by these then any other wayes, as we formerly said when we treated of sufferings.

The chief use we are to make of temptation, is to receive it, land flook on it's the conduct of God everus; we must be cept it with a profound bunility with a fab. jestion and dependance of find, upon the conwith humility, becanse the foul which follows the frie of true Devotion, must defire throughly to be humbled, and embrace with readiness of spirit, all the wayes of bumiliation, and all the occasions which prefent themselves therein. It is a maxime in all estates and exercises of Devotion, that the principall use we are to make of all the wayes of Godover us, is bumility, and therefore, as temptation is a way of God, a way of rigour and danger, fo must we humble our felves much therein, the more we are tempted and abandened; For, in effelt, the best and most profitable diffesttion that we can be in, is to annihilate our felves before God; and like Job, place our felves, if it be requisite, upon a dung-hill, to attend and receive what punishment so-ever the hand of God shall vouchsafe to inflict

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infil upon us, bols it not reefer it should be ford If God be so pleased us to muit bilate us by pains and temperations, what have we to fay against it d. To what purpose so much fear, fo much relationey? If God will purificus in this fire, we must hold our selves content anif he will bumble us, we must ennihilate our selvess if by temptation he will use his justice, and purish us, why should we be troubled thereat & Yearhough he should leave us to be mallemed up by the temptas tion (which can never fall out but through our own fault) let us accept of his judgments, and adore his justice, faying with Eli, when he heard from the mouth of little Samuel, Sam 3. the decree of Gods justice against him, Do- 18. minus est guod bonne all in oculis fuis faciat. Let us fay the fame, let us receive all from the hand of God, with great humility. This is the first use we are to make of temptation.

Another is to receive it with subjection of foul to the Will of God! Temptation is the conduct of God over us. We must not therefore confider him that tempteth us, nor yet the temptation we grown under, but the order of God, and the defignishe hath upon us in that temperion. Nothing can happen to us, but by his permission, though the Devil make it bis constant bufines, to burt, molest, and de-Broy us, if he could, yet he hath no power but what

what he receives from God, all his policy is limited. We must not therefore legara the Devil that comprete us, not the tempt from or malice of our enemies, but the will and order of Godin the temptation, which the state of

To comprehend this well, we must remember that tempeation is not onely a permission of God, but one of his ordinary ways of proceeding over us, to conduct us to him. Whence it followes, that it is not enough to fuffer, and to fubmit to temptations, but we must do it purely, and bolily. For feeing temptations and afflictions are the ordinary ways of God to conduct us to him, we must not in temptation make any pause, or think it fufficient to bear them patiently, or to fight against them, but we must pass further, and go even to God, to whom they will conduct us, if we make fuch use of them as we ought. Thus in temptation, we must rather regard God then the temptation, that binds us to God. It is true, we may fear to be overcome, but if we be left to God, he will not fail us in our necessity; he promised to be with us in our agonies and temptations. Let us be but faithfull in our duties and actions, and without doubt, he will be faithfull in his promiles. Housell, no

A third use of temptations, is, to refer them to the glory of God, and to offer to him the

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late that we bear, and all that paffeth in us. This is grounded both upon our duties, and the designes of God, who wills, that we referr to him all the effates of our feel, and all the selions and moments of our life, that is, all that is in us, and all that we are. This use is also grounded on the condition of all things which are opposite to bonour, and pay hominge to God, but principally, the Christian, who is called to the state of Christianity, only to ferve: and bonour God , and particularly, fuch as make profession of piety; fince true devotion requires much fidelity, and wills us to make nfe of all things to unite us to God, and to render to him the honours and homages due to his divine and supreme Majesty.

from the beginning to this instant, we shall see that we end where we began, and that we have done nothing, but shewn the Christian, who would be perfect, that true piety consists in purifying the beart, and making it worthy to bear and possess God; that he is truly derout, who lives according to the spirit and grace of Christianity; that to arrive at this happiness, we must adhere to Jesus Christ, our way and means to bring us to God; that the principal care we ought to have in these exercises, is, to preserve our selves therein, which, indeed, brings us to an adherence to the Son

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of God, and to live with great fidelity and vigilancy, subject to the conduct of Jesus, and dependant upon his boly Ordinances. Thefe are the foundations we must lay, if we would acquire true piety; and when we come to the Consideration of Works, and to express the externall worsbip, love, and service, which we would render to God, we have faid, that it is not enough to do good things, but we must accomplish them by the conduct of his holy spirit, according to his intentions, and in boly diffusitions. We have already proposed the method; it suffices to know, that therein confifts the effence and nature of a Christian, for which we render to God the honour and fervice This is all we mean to shew in due to him. this Discourse, which we will conclude with the words and prayer of Saint Paul, The God of peace make you perfett in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is acceptable in his fight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Heb. 13. 30, 21.

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